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Longevity Among Special Education Teachers in the
Houston County, Georgia, School System

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A PREDICTOR
OF CAREER LONGEVITY AMONG SPECIAL
EDUCATION TEACHERS IN THE HOUSTON COUNTY, GEORGIA
SCHOOL SYSTEM

by

JESSE W. DAVIS

(Under the Direction of Walter S. Polka)

ABSTRACT

In an effort to provide for a better understanding of the factors that exert influence on the career decisions of special educators, the present study sought to examine the influence of emotional intelligence and various demographic factors on the career longevity of special educators. One hundred twenty nine special education teachers in the Houston County, Georgia School System completed a two-part survey consisting of the General Emotional Intelligence Scale and a researcher-created demographic questionnaire. The following overarching research question was answered through this study- *What is the role of emotional intelligence in the career decisions of special education teachers?* In addition, the following research sub-questions were answered- *To what extent does emotional intelligence depend on the career longevity of special education teachers?; To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education teachers vary by school level factors?; To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education*

teachers vary by socio-demographic factors? Results of the study indicated that the emotional intelligence ratings of veteran special educator respondents, was on average, significantly higher than the emotional intelligence ratings of respondents their non-veteran peer respondents. Comparisons of the mean emotional intelligence ratings for respondents when grouped by various socio-demographic and school level factors showed results of mixed significance. Statistically significant differences were found in the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents when grouped according to experience, race, age, annual salary, level of degree held, type of teacher preparation program completed and socioeconomic status. No statistically significant differences were found in the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents when grouped by sex or urban/rural school location. This study's findings hold greatest implications for school administrators, those persons who are responsible for teacher preparatory training, students who receive special education support and special educators.

INDEX WORDS: Special educators, Career decisions, Career Longevity, Emotional intelligence, Demographic factors

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SCHOOL SSSYTEM

by

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Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us, there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.”

--President John F. Kennedy

(National Institute of Environmental Health Services, 2005)

Education in the United States

The above quote conveys the vitality of the role of educator. Despite President Kennedy’s sentiment of education as a noble profession, many areas of teaching service are facing critical teacher shortages as working conditions and non-competitive salaries are areas of concern for those entering the field of education. Mathematics, science, special education and bilingual education are all areas of teacher certification that report personnel shortages on a national level (National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse, 2005).

Public and private school teachers serving in kindergarten through twelfth grade number 3.8 million and comprise the largest group of educators in the United States (US Department of Labor, 2005). Public school systems in the United States are typically organized into three levels of instruction: elementary schools serving pre-kindergarten through fifth or sixth grade, middle or junior high schools serving either grades six through eight or seven through nine, and high schools serving either grades nine through twelve or ten through twelve. Public and private school educators serving in middle schools or elementary schools may offer service in either general or special education

programs. Teachers at the high school also offer instruction in either general or special education, with general education tracts of instruction typically consisting of college preparatory or career technical tracts of study (Conderman & Katsiyannis, 2002). Regardless of their level of instruction (elementary, middle, or high school), special educators serve in one of four capacities (Heward, 2000): *self-contained* settings in which teachers serve the same group of students throughout their entire school day, *resource settings* in which teachers serve students in small groups for four or fewer classes during the school day, *collaborative settings* in which the special educator co-teaches a class with a general education teacher, or in *consultative settings* in which the special education teacher serves individual students in a minimal support capacity that typically does not involve direct instruction.

The United States Department of Labor (2005) reports that as of 2002, special education teachers accounted for eighteen percent of the 3.8 million public school teachers practicing in the United States. The remaining eighty-two percent of public school teachers were classified as general education teachers. Such a discrepancy in number between general and special education teacher populations is the result of demand, as there are fewer students served through special education programs than general education programs. Ninety percent of the general education teachers who are practicing in the United States are employed in public school systems (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). The remaining ten percent teach in private schools. Comparatively, ninety-three percent of special education teachers are employed in public schools with the remaining seven percent working in private schools (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005).

Due to special education laws and legislation, public schools must guarantee an appropriate education for all learners regardless of their individual needs. Because of such stipulations, most public schools have special education programs staffed with several special education teachers who are trained to meet the individualized needs of their students. Since they are not public entities, private schools are not compelled to enroll and serve children with special needs. Due to the absence of compulsory education of all learners regardless of ability level, most private schools do not offer special programs for exceptional needs learners, and therefore employ a minimal number of special educators (Greatschools.net, 2003).

As of 2004, the average length of service for all teachers in the United States was reported to be 15 years (United States Department of Labor, 2005). A significant number of special education teachers have been found to depart their field of service after 4 or 5 years, making their average length of service much lower (Stough & Palmer, 2003). The 2004 national mean yearly salary for teachers was \$49,429 (National Education Association, 2005). This figure has risen from teachers' average salary for the 2001-2002 school year which registered at \$44,367 and represents an increase of 11.4%. The national average yearly earnings for special educators as of 2004 was comparable to that of educators in general registering at \$49,750. Special educators' average salary for 2004 increased by 15.9% from their 2002 average earnings of \$42,915 (United States Department of Labor, 2004).

Public schools in the United States are characterized by an aging workforce (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). Teachers between the ages of 40 and 60 comprise the most populous segment of public school teachers nationally. When

compared to other occupations, those entering the field of education tend to enter at an age that is relatively older. The average age for beginning teachers is 29 years of age (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). The current, relatively advanced age of entrants into the education field is in part a product of alternative certification programs. Such programs have allowed for many such nontraditional-aged teachers to gain entry in the field of education (National Center for Education Information, 2005).

Traditionally teachers in both general and special education have been required to hold at least a four-year college degree in their field of teaching and must complete an approved teacher preparation program in order to teach in the United States (US Department of Labor, 2005). In the 2002-03 academic year 170,235 prospective teachers completed such traditional teacher preparation programs (U. S. Department of Education-Office of Postsecondary Education 2005). In response to long-standing teacher shortages, alternative means of teacher certification have been developed in 47 U. S. states and the District of Columbia. Since 1983, approximately 250,000 educators have received their initial teacher certification through alternative certification programs which do not require that prospective teachers hold a degree in education in order to obtain certification (National Center for Education Information, 2005). During the 2002-2003 academic year, approximately 30,000 teachers received their certification through alternative certification programs (U. S. Department of Education- Office of Postsecondary Education, 2005).

The Special Education Teacher Shortage

While math, science, bilingual education and special education are all service areas in which critical teacher shortages exist (Boehner, 2003), special education has

been identified as the shortage area that is facing the most critical shortage of personnel (Chaika, 2000). Data taken from the U.S. Department of Education indicate that the shortage of fully certified special education teachers has increased to 47,532 teaching positions nationally which equates to 11.4% of the total number of special education teachers needed in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). The number of school-aged children identified as being in need of special education services is increasing while the number of entrants into the field of special education is declining. The disparity in demand and teacher availability has been called a “crisis” (Brownell, Ross, Colon & McCallum, 2005).

Contributing to the critical nature of the special educator shortage is the component of 2002’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) education reform act which calls for highly qualified teachers to be in place in all U. S. classrooms by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. In order for teachers to obtain highly qualified status as proposed by NCLB, they must hold a minimum of a bachelor’s degree, have full state certification, and demonstrate subject area competence in each subject taught (U. S. Department of Education- Office of Postsecondary Education, 2005). Considering that few special education programs can offer subject departmentalization for its teachers, most special educators are faced with seeking not only certification in their primary special education discipline, but in multiple subject areas as well. Although meant to ensure that all students are receiving the most effective instruction from the most capable instructors, the highly qualified premise of the NCLB legislation has also closed some alternative certification pathways into the field of special education, and has therefore intensified the shortage of special education teachers. The NCLB legislation has been amended to

provide for loan education forgiveness incentives for prospective educators who are willing to work in shortage areas such as special education (Billingsley & McLeskey, 2004).

Employment of special education teachers is expected to increase faster than the average for all other occupations through the year 2012 (United States Department of Labor, 2005). Such job availability is due to the increasing number of students being identified for special education services since the 1990 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the shortage of highly qualified teachers (United States Department of Labor, 2004).

Career Decisions of Special Education Teachers

As a contemporary topic of concern among the education community, the career decisions of special educators have been the subject of numerous research efforts. A body of research has developed in response to the need for information about the career decisions of special education professionals. Inquiries relating to the factors that affect the career paths of special education teachers have been of particular interest to researchers and have therefore spawned more than twenty special educator attrition/retention-based research endeavors (Billingsley, 2004).

Attrition Among Special Education Teachers

One of the terms that is most often encountered when examining the literature relating to special education teacher shortage is the term *attrition*. The term attrition is used to describe the phenomenon of voluntary resignation among employees (Stempien & Loeb, 2002). According to Billingsley (2004), special educator attrition may be manifested as departure from the field of education altogether or departure from special

education service into non-special education fields of service. The attrition rate for special education teachers is consistently higher than for other subject areas (Zhang & Conroy, 2003). The high attrition rate for special education teachers is especially problematic when considering that vacancies in special education are often cited as the most difficult to fill (McLeskey, Tyler & Flippin, 2004).

A recent survey of over 8,000 teachers and special education service providers indicated that a smaller percentage of special education teachers serving emotionally disturbed students (58.5 %) and learning disabled students (62.9 %) intended to stay in their profession until retirement than general education teachers (74.0 %)(National Council on Teacher Quality, 2004). Numerous other research attempts aimed at identifying the factors that contribute to attrition among the special educator workforce have been conducted (Billingsley, 2004). Research by Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Barkanic and Maislin (1999), Miller, Brownell and Smith (1999), Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, and Harniss, (2001), and Katsyannis, Zhang & Conroy (2003) have all provided findings that have assisted in clarifying the phenomenon of special educator attrition. However, despite the staggering statistics that show that attrition among special educators is significantly higher than attrition among general education teachers (Stempein & Loeb, 2002) and that certain areas of special education service will lose up to half of its teachers each year (George, George, Gersten, and Grosenick (1995), some special educators defy these trends and statistics and enjoy lengthy careers.

Retention of Special Education Teachers

Recognizing the need to examine the factors that *promote* retention as well as the factors that are correlated with attrition, numerous researchers have chosen to examine

the special education teacher shortage phenomenon from a retention-oriented perspective. Marshall and Marshall (2003) employed such a retention-oriented approach in their examination of teacher shortages and reported research findings that closely mirror the results of related attrition-oriented studies conducted by Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Barkanic and Maislin (1999), Miller, Brownell and Smith (1999), Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, and Harniss, (2001) and Katsyannis, Zhang & Conroy (2003). Marshall and Marshall report that personal factors such as the ability to effectively cope with stress impact special education teachers' decisions to remain in the field of education. Other research findings point to organizational factors, such as effective discipline of students, the physical work environment, and administrative support as impacting educators' decisions to remain in the field of special education (Hare & Heap, 2001). Research by Hare and Heap (2001) also indicated that monetary compensation for work and pre-service training were self-reported by special teachers as having significant impact on their retention.

These same retention-based attributions are reflected in research by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission in their 2001 Georgia Teacher Retention Study (GTRS) by Justice (2003) and Otto and Arnold (2005). In the GTRS, a randomly selected sample of Georgia's teachers reported that their interaction with students; a collegial work environment that is conducive to teamwork, strong and consistent administrative support, and the opportunity to make a difference in children's lives all impacted job satisfaction and retention (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2001).

Billingsley's Conceptualization of Factors Influencing the Career Decisions of Special Education Teachers

A conceptualization of the factors that influence the career decisions of special education teachers has been developed by Billingsley (2004) based on special educator attrition and retention oriented research. The Billingsley conceptualization employs a tri-categorical approach to examining the career decisions of special education teachers.

First, Billingsley offers a description of the *external factors* that influence career based decision making for special education teachers. Societal, economic, and institutional factors comprise Billingsley's external factors. Such external factors are proposed to have a minimal and indirect influence on special educators, career decisions.

Employment factors is offered as the second category of factors that influence the career decisions of special education teachers. Employment factors describe all factors that are central to the professional experiences of special education teachers.

Employment factors of career influence as identified by Billingsley, include, but are not limited to: student and caseload issues, paperwork demands, role problems, professional development, collegial and administrative support, school climate, and salary.

Research efforts concerned with the influence of employment factors on the career decisions of special educators have confirmed the significance of the building principal's influence on a school's work environment and climate (Kelley, Thornton & Daughtery, 2005) and teachers' job satisfaction (Gertsen, Keating, Yovanoff & Harniss, 2001).

Personal factors comprise the third category in Billingsley's conceptualization of the factors that influence career decision making for special educators. Personal factors are those factors outside the realm of employment that have either a direct or indirect

effect on career decision making. Billingsley's conceptual framework identifies the following as personal factors of influence on special educators' career decisions: age, gender, race, academic ability, and personal life circumstances such as marriage, divorce, family relocation, pregnancy, and childrearing. Conspicuously absent from Billingsley's conceptualization of personal factors that influence the career decisions of special educators is consideration for many of the unique and individualized personality and ability-based qualities that are possessed by all.

General cognitive ability as an influence on career decisions and job performance has been the subject of numerous research attempts; however, the existence of such a relationship has received sporadic support in the professional literature (Sternberg, 1996; Hunter and Hunter, 1984). Conversely, emotional intelligence, a more contemporary measure of personal ability, has consistently been linked to job performance and career staying power in the professional literature (Cooper & Sawaf, 1996; Goleman, 1998; Slaski & Cartwright, 2002; Wong & Law, 2002). In fact, a study conducted by Jae (1997) indicated that emotional intelligence was a much stronger predictor of job performance than general cognitive ability.

Emotional Intelligence

"...in navigating our lives, it is our fears and envies, our rages and depressions, our worries and anxieties that steer us day to day. Even the most academically brilliant among us are vulnerable to being undone by unruly emotions. The price we pay for emotional illiteracy is in failed marriages and troubled families, in stunted social and

work lives, in deteriorating physical health and mental anguish and, as a society, in tragedies such as killings..."

- Daniel Goleman, Author and Researcher

(Goleman, 1995)

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions in us and in our relationships. EI describes abilities distinct from, but complementary to, academic intelligence or the purely cognitive capacities measured by IQ” (Hay Group, 2005). Emotional intelligence theory is grounded in the work of many of the prominent researchers of intelligence such as Howard Gardner and Robert Sternberg (Hay Group, 2005). Daniel Goleman (1995), whose research is credited with bringing the concept of emotional intelligence into the popular consciousness, suggests that emotional intelligence is an ability that can be learned and refined through training. The Hay Group and many other organizations that are concerned with EI development offer training in the best practices for the development of emotional intelligence. Such training is purported to develop improved emotional intelligence in trainees who then may influence the emotionally intelligent functioning and subsequent success of their affiliated organizations (Hay Group, 2005; Talent Solutions; 2005, Cherniss & Goleman, 2005; Wolfe, 2005).

Utilization of measures of emotional intelligence as predictors of employee quality is now commonplace in the business profession. Indeed, measures of emotional intelligence such as the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory - EQ-I, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and the Emotional Intelligence

Appraisal (EIA) have been successfully employed by business-related organizations due to their association with success in identifying “talented” individuals who are interpersonally skilled, change agile, (TalentSmart, 2004, Human Dimension, 2005) and committed to their careers (Brown, George-Curran & Smith, 2003; Cooper & Sawaf, 1996; Slaski & Cartwright, 2002; Wong & Law, 2002).

Despite the existence of continually replicated research findings that point to the worth of emotional intelligence as a predictor of job success (Lyons & Schneider, 2005, Cherniss, 2005, Goleman, 2001), research efforts relative to special education career decisions are void of consideration of emotional intelligence as a predictor of teachers’ career longevity. Should veteran special educators be found to possess high levels of emotional intelligence, valuable insight might be gained in the quest to increase career longevity among special educators. Therefore, it is the intention of the researcher to examine the influence of emotional intelligence as a predictor of career longevity among special education teachers in Georgia.

Statement of the Problem

The field of special education is experiencing a critical shortage of highly qualified teachers. According to the United States Department of Labor (2004), special education hiring rates will be, on average, higher than the national average for hiring in other occupations. Such job availability is heavily impacted by constant turnover in the special education workforce.

Despite the excellent prospects for employment found among prospective special education teachers, school systems complain that qualified applicants are difficult to find. Eleven thousand vacant special education teaching positions were reported to have

existed during the 1999-2000 school year (U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2004a). Not all those who are defecting from the field of special education are leaving the teaching profession but instead are seeking certification and positions in other areas of education. Such within-occupation movement from special to general education service suggests that special education teachers face challenges that are unique to their field of service (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, & Weber, 1997).

Investigations into special education teachers' job satisfaction and subsequent career decisions have identified many influential factors which affect both satisfaction ratings and length of service. These factors can be categorized as external employment-related or personal in nature. *External factors* are those factors that are separate from the individual and employing entity. External factors such as economic and societal influences are seen to have an indirect impact on the career decisions of special education teachers. *Employment factors* encompass all factors that are central to a special education teachers' work-related experience. Employment factors have been the focus of a plethora of research attempts. Excessive workload, poor physical working environment, and inadequate training are commonly reported as career-influencing factors. *Personal factors* are those factors that are unique to the individual. Innate qualities such as ability, achievement levels, personal life circumstances, and personality ratings are examples of personal factors that influence career decisions.

The body of research that identifies the factors which influence the career decisions of special educators has been long-standing and well known, yet teacher retention rates have shown no improvement. The majority of the research on teacher retention has examined the experiences of general education teachers. The few retention

oriented studies that examine special education teachers have yielded results that are very similar to those obtained in attrition oriented studies. Such agreement indicates that the same factors influence special education teachers' career decisions whether their decision is to leave or stay in their field of service. These research findings, while seemingly conclusive, are somewhat uni-dimensional in that the majority of the existing research concerned with career decisions in special education takes an employment oriented focus. Because of their suggested indirect influence on career decisions, external factors have been forsaken in most research attempts. Personal factors such as ability and personality have been the subject of much career related research in business settings but not in relation to teachers. Naturally, personal life circumstances such as pregnancy and family relocation have been shown to influence the career decisions of special education teachers'; however, beyond these examinations, the influence of other personal factors such as emotional intelligence on the career decisions of special education teachers is notably missing from the professional literature.

A study which examines the influence of emotional intelligence on educators' career longevity might yield additional insight into the unique factors that influence the career decisions of special educators. Research in the field of business has shown that personal qualities that are unique to individuals such as levels of achievement and ability can be correlated with success in life and work. In particular, the quite contemporary construct of emotional intelligence has been shown to be a reliable predictor of job success as measured by length of career service. In fact, emotional intelligence has been shown to be a much more reliable predictor of job success as measured by career

longevity and accomplishment than classic measures of cognitive ability such as intelligence quotients.

By identifying the influence of emotional intelligence on the career decisions of special educators, school administrators and other stakeholders in education will be better able to support novice special education teachers and promote their personal development and longevity of service. Therefore it was the intention of the researcher through conducting this study to examine emotional intelligence ratings for special education teachers as a predictor of their career longevity. In addition, the researcher sought to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and various socio-demographic and school demographic factors among special educators. The researcher intended to answer the following overarching research question: *What is the role of emotional intelligence in the career decisions of special education teachers?* The following sub-question were also be considered:

1. To what extent does emotional intelligence relate on the career longevity of special education teachers?
2. To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education teachers vary by school level factors?
3. To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education teachers vary by socio-demographic factors?

Significance of the Study

The insight gained from this study will be of value to the many stakeholders who have an interest in the education of special needs learners. School systems and individual schools, school administrators, special educators and students who receive special

education support all stand to benefit by the findings of this study. The better understanding of the factors that influence the career decisions of special educators will help to ensure that both novice and experienced special educators receive the required support that will allow them to enjoy lengthy service.

Individual schools and school systems as a whole that face special education teacher shortages stand to benefit from the findings of this study. By developing a more refined understanding of the influences that impact special educators' career decisions, schools and school systems can ensure that their hiring and recruitment practices are aimed at securing teachers with the greatest potential for retention and ultimate career longevity.

When armed with information pertaining to the factors that influence career decision making among special education teachers, building and district-level administrators and university personnel who are responsible for teacher preparation programs can design development opportunities that will be of maximum benefit to prospective and novice teachers. Building principals will also value the results of this study as they will be able to apply the principles set forth in this study to foster an emotionally supportive working environment within which their faculty and staff may operate.

In considering the many implications of the special educator teacher shortage, one is reminded to maintain a focus on the most salient and meaningful influence of teacher retention and career longevity- the ability to offer an effective education for students. Should this study help to capture a better understanding of the influences on the career decisions of special educators, students receiving special education support and services

will be rewarded with the prospect of receiving instruction from more experienced and accomplished instructors. Ultimately, the field of education as a whole is not outside of the realm of this study's impact. With a more comprehensive understanding of the career decisions of special educators, teacher shortage research initiatives in the field of education can be refocused to address other critical areas of need.

The researcher initially became interested in the issue of career decisions of special education teachers as a result of his own experiences as a teacher of exceptional needs learners. The high turnover rate among the researchers' special educator peers was an alarming trend that occurred on a yearly basis. After five years of teaching experience as a special educator, the researcher received a position in school administration. The researcher was informed by the county's Assistant Superintendent for Personnel that his short five years in the classroom met the minimum requirements for experience to hold an administrative position, but that alarmingly, these same five years equaled the average length of service for special education teachers in the school system in question. The researcher found this to be a surprising revelation that has maintained his interest. In reflecting on his experiences as an administrator, the researcher has experienced firsthand the difficulties that are associated with staffing special education teaching positions with accomplished, veteran educators. Due to his continued concern for issues relating to teacher shortages in special education, the researcher was determined to conduct research that would shed light on the issues that influence special educator attrition and longevity.

PROCEDURES

Research Design

In order to answer the question, “What is the role of emotional intelligence in the career decisions of special educators?” an approach of quantitative methods was used in this study. An approach of quantitative methods was most appropriate for use in this study due to the following qualifications: this study was deductive in nature in that it worked from a generalization to address a very specific theory; this study was descriptive in that it endeavored to determine the existence of a relationship between a continuous independent variable (emotional intelligence rating) and a categorical dependent variable (veteran/non-veteran special education teachers); the data collected in this study were quantitative in nature, data were based on an interval scale; the study’s findings are generalizable to other populations.

Sample and Population

A population of special education teachers in middle Georgia was examined in this study as they represented the population of interest. The Houston County School System, located in middle Georgia, at the time of this study employed a total of 245 employees who work in roles which relate to the education of students with special needs. Of these 245 employees, 180 work in roles which involve direct classroom instruction of students. The entire population of classroom-based special education teachers, totaling 180 individuals, was solicited for participation in this study.

Of particular interest in this study were respondents who have earned 13 years or more of credible teaching service. Teachers with 13 years or more of credible teaching service were considered to be veteran teachers for purpose of this study. The criteria of

13 years was chosen since such longevity reflects the average length of service for special education teachers in the southeastern United States as of 2002 (U.S. Department of Education- Office of Special Education Programs, 2002).

An additional sample of special educators participated in pilot testing for this study. The sample used for pilot testing purposes consisted of eight respondents. Four veteran and four non-veteran special education teachers were selected at random from the respondent population for participation in the pilot study.

Instrument

In order to gauge the role of emotional intelligence characteristics in the career longevity of veteran special educators, a survey instrument was developed and administered to prospective respondents. The survey instrument was comprised of parts A and B. Part A consisted of a researcher-developed questionnaire that served to gather both socio-demographic and school demographic information from respondents. The General Emotional Intelligence Scale (GEIS) constituted Part B of the survey instrument.

Demographic data to be gathered from the researcher-developed survey included include personal information, information relative to respondents' careers and the context in which they work. The researcher-developed survey instrument consisted of a total of 10 items, comprised of multiple choice items and short answer items. Two of the researcher-developed survey items were answered by the researcher following completion by respondents and based on their responses.

The General Emotional Intelligence Scale was administered to each respondent in order to gauge their emotional intelligence rating. The GEIS, developed by Albert Mehrabian (2001), is a self-reporting instrument that consists of 45 Likert-type response

items and tests two constructs: emotional intelligence and emotional thinking. The GEIS's correlation to personality scales has shown it to be a significant correlates of life success (Mehrabian, 2000). The researcher purchased administration rights for the GEIS from Albert Mehrabian.

Before final administration of the survey instrument, pilot testing was conducted in order to ensure that questions are answered as intended and that allocated completion time is appropriate. Any changes that were deemed necessary following the pilot testing were made prior to the final administration of the survey instrument.

Data Collection

In order to analyze the data pertaining to emotional intelligence and the career longevity of special education teachers, the mean emotional intelligence rating for veteran special education teachers was compared to the mean emotional intelligence rating of non-veteran special education teachers. The interpretation manual that accompanies the GEIS was employed to aide in the interpretation of emotional intelligence ratings (higher scores on the GEIS correspond to higher ratings of emotional intelligence). Additional comparisons were made between the emotional intelligence ratings of respondents and the various socio-demographic and school-related data to be gathered in this study.

Before data collection was initiated, approval and permission from the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board was sought and received. Once approval was received, the preparation of instrumentation and sampling efforts began.

Procedures of data collection

Surveys were be distributed and collected through the use of the Houston County School System mail delivery system. Using a system-wide faculty directory, the number of special education teachers working at each school in the school system was determined. Envelopes containing the appropriate number of surveys as well as researcher-addressed return envelopes were mailed to the principal of each school. Along with each school's surveys, a letter outlining the purpose of the research, providing directions for distribution and collection of survey instruments and containing an offering of thanks were sent. Principals were asked to distribute to and then collect from their special education faculty, the survey instruments. Using the provided researcher-addressed envelopes, principals were be asked to return completed surveys to the researcher.

Once survey instruments were returned, the researcher collected data pertaining to two additional organizational demographic factors for each respondent. The researcher identified the overall socioeconomic status of each respondent's school's student population and each school's location (defined as urban or rural). The researcher assumed the responsibility of identifying this data due to the fact that respondents were not likely to possess knowledge of such specific information

Data Analysis

T-tests of independent means were utilized to make comparisons of the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents when grouped according to the several socio-demographic and school-level variables of interest in this study. T-tests of independent means were also employed to analyze the data pertaining to the emotional

intelligence of respondents. The t-tests revealed any significant differences that existed in the mean emotional intelligence rating for respondent groups. A web-based statistical calculator was used to perform necessary statistical operations

Limitations and Delimitations

Due to the nature of the proposed study, the study has the following limitations:

1. Participants' test response accuracy and honesty may have been compromised should they have interacted with pilot study respondents.
2. Due to a potentially unrepresentative sample, the results of this study may not be generalizable to other populations.

Due to the nature of the proposed study, the study has the following delimitations:

1. Numerous instruments have been developed that provide ratings of emotional intelligence. The majority of the available emotional intelligence rating instruments are either difficult to obtain or are of considerable length (70 or more items). The General Emotional intelligence Scale was selected for use in this study due to its availability and relative brevity (45 items).
2. Response rates were found not to be as high as desired due most likely to the researcher's reliance on the use of a mail-based survey collection system.
3. Although they were given precise instructions for administration of the researcher's survey instrument, the likelihood of inconsistency through respondent self-administration presented a potential delimitation.
4. The researcher chose 13 years or more of credible service as a special education teacher as the criteria that was used to define veteran special educator status. This criteria was based on the most current, related data, proposed by SPENSE (2002),

for the average length of service for special educators in the southeastern United States. No more specific or current data, pertaining to length of service for special educators in Houston County, Georgia, or in the state of Georgia was available. Demographics of the present day special educator population in Houston County, Georgia may not reflect the same characteristics, thus, the researcher's criteria for veteran special educator status may not have accurately reflect the special educator population in Houston County, Georgia.

Summary

If our nation's problematic shortage of qualified special education teachers is to be rectified, more information about the factors that influence the career decisions of special educators must be gathered. This study has provided insightful, yet-to-be examined information about the experiences of veteran special education teachers that will aid administrators and teacher preparation programs in supporting special educators. This quantitative study employed the use of an existing survey instrument and a researcher-developed survey which were used to determine the role of emotional intelligence in the career decisions of special educators. The sample included 180 special education teachers from the Houston County, Georgia School System.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The chronic shortage of special education teachers that has and continues to plague the education system of the United States has had far-reaching effects. From national efforts to recruit those who are qualified and willing to teach special education, to the impact that the shortages have on individual exceptional needs learners, the consequences of the national shortage of qualified special education teachers is undeniable (Katsyannis, A., Zhang, D. & Conroy, M. A., 2003). In an effort to combat this personnel shortage, researchers have endeavored to identify the factors that influence the career decision of special education teachers (Brownell & Smith, 1993). Some researchers have taken an approach that examines the factors that influence special education teachers' tendency to leave the field while others have elected to attempt to identify the factors that contribute to teachers' longevity of service. Such research efforts have helped to establish an ever-growing body of professional literature that is focused on the career decisions of special education teachers (Billingsley, 2004).

Over the past two decades, the bulk of the research pertaining to the career decisions of special educators has focused on employment related factors and their role in influencing the career decisions of special education teachers (Billingsley, 2004; McLesky, Tyler & Flippin, 2004). The impact of external factors such as societal influence has been given little research attention as such factors are thought to have a

minimal affect on the career decisions of special educators (Billingsley, 2004). Personal factors, such as teacher demographics and individual ability have received generous amounts of scrutiny and consideration in the examination of factors that influence the career decisions of special educators (Billingsley, 2004).

The cognitive ability of individuals, represented by Intelligence Quotient (IQ) ratings, is one factor that has received attention in special education teacher retention studies (Frank & Keith, 1984). While the concept of IQ is well-known as a predictor of academic success (Ridgell & Lounsbury, 2004), it has not consistently been shown to be a valid predictor of career success and longevity among special educators (Cherniss and Goleman, 2001). However, emotional intelligence, an expansion of the classic idea of intelligence or cognitive ability, has been identified as a predictor of job success and career longevity in many occupations (Brown, George-Curran & Smith, 2003).

The research that supports the notion that emotional intelligence is a predictor of job success has been conducted primarily in the area of business (Caruso, 1999). No research-based studies relating to the concept of emotional intelligence have occurred with special education teachers. Considering that the roles of unique individualized factors such as emotional intelligence have yet to be examined, the factors that contribute to career longevity among special education teachers have not been studied in full. A scientific examination of the role of emotional intelligence in the career decisions of special educators might yield valuable insight into the chronic shortage of special education teachers.

Education in the United States

The education system in the United States is comprised of three distinct instructional levels: elementary, secondary and post-secondary. Students typically complete from five to six years of instruction at the elementary level, with six or seven years typically following at the secondary level (United States Department of Education, 2005).

According to the USA Study Guide (2005), which provides an overview of the US education system for foreign students, the vast majority of children start school at the age of five years in the U. S. education system. Children first complete kindergarten (or pre-kindergarten at age four if such programs are available) and then complete five years of education referred to as elementary school (first through fifth grades). In grade levels that serve younger students (typically pre-kindergarten through second grade) students receive instruction in socialization and self-care skills as well as in the basic concepts that allow for the development of reading, writing, and mathematics skills (Associated Early Care and Education, 2002). In its overview of the U. S. Education system, the U. S. Department of Education (2005) reports that as students advance through elementary school, instructional focus lies heavily in the subject area concentrations of mathematics, science, social studies and language arts. Ability-based programs are available in most elementary schools in order to meet the instructional needs of different student populations. Remedial and special education programs exist to address the unique learning needs of students who qualify for such programs. In addition, accelerated academic programs are also available to challenge gifted learners (U. S. Department of Education, 2005).

Successful completion of elementary school allows students to enter a secondary school. Such secondary schools most often consist of seven grade levels (sixth through twelfth grades). Depending on the state and district, early secondary school grades may be organized into middle schools (typically sixth through eighth grades) or junior high schools (typically seventh through ninth grades) (USA Study Guide, 2005). According to Ron Banks (2004), an Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) contributor, students in middle schools and junior high schools receive an education that is intensely focused on subject area instruction. Students also receive exposure to fine arts instruction, often referred to as exploratory classes, in middle school and junior high school (Loundsbury, 1996). Just as they do in elementary school programs, ability levels impact students' course of study in middle and junior high school to a marked degree (Banks, 2004). More refined gifted and special education programs exist at middle school levels, providing more focused and individualized instruction for students in need of enrichment or remediation (U. S. Department of Education, 2005).

The latter years of secondary school are referred to as high school (USA Study guide, 2005). The U. S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2005) reports that high school instructional programs provide students with the opportunity to exercise greater choice in their courses of study. Instructional focus in high school remains on academic subject areas as well as on broader offerings of elective fine arts and vocational courses. High school instructional programs also prepare students for transition into fields of trade or college. Advanced placement courses and special education support services continue to be available to needy students at the high school level (U. S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education,

2005). Successful completion of high school courses of study will provide students with a diploma of graduation (USA Study Guide, 2005).

After completing secondary-level schooling, students who wish to further their education may enroll at a two-year junior college or technical college to earn an associates degree (USA Study Guide, 2005). Four-year colleges and universities provide additional post-secondary education options for students (The United States Department of Education, 2005). The United States Department of Education (2005) reports that four year colleges and universities offer degrees such as the four-year bachelor's degree and more advanced degrees such as a master's degree which typically requires one to two years of additional coursework beyond the bachelor's degree. Specialist Degrees are available in many fields as are Doctoral programs which require an additional four or five years of additional coursework beyond the scope of the bachelor's degree. In 1992, total enrollment in U. S. colleges and universities peaked with 14.5 million enrollees (U. S. Department of Education, 2003).

During the mid-twentieth century, student enrollments at elementary levels in the United States increased dramatically. The elementary population growth reached its zenith in 1971. This substantial rise in school aged populations was a result of the "baby boom" that occurred following World War II. School-aged populations experienced a decline nationally until 1985 when populations began to plateau and then rise once again in the early 1990s (Rathbun & West, 2004).

Student enrollment in Pre-Kindergarten through the eighth grade registered at 29.9 million in 1990. The same population of students numbered 34.1 million in 2002 (Rathbun & West, 2004). Secondary school-aged students numbered 11.2 million in

1990, and 14.1 million in 2002. Projections suggest that elementary school enrollment numbers will decrease slightly until 2006 when numbers are expected to increase steadily through the year 2014 (Gerald & Hussa, 2003). Secondary school enrollments are predicted to increase steadily through 2007, after which, a leveling off in enrollment is expected (Choy, 2002).

The vast majority of students in the United States are educated in public school systems (Council for American Private Education (CAPE), 2005). Private school and homeschooling options are available for students as well. As of 2003, 1.1 million school aged children received their education through homeschooling (Princiotta, Bielick, & Chapman, 2004). Private school student enrollment has experienced little change in recent years, with CAPE (2005) reporting students in private schools accounting for approximately 12% of the total student population in the U. S. Enrollment in private post-secondary institutions rose slightly from 21% to 24 % of the total U. S. post-secondary student population from 1993-2004 (Broughman & Pugh, 2004).

As of 2004, the education attainment of adults in the U. S. had reached an all-time high (U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004a), with 85 % of adults in the U. S. possessing a high school diploma, and 28 % holding a bachelor's degree (Kim, Hagedon & Williamson, 2004). The year 2004 saw seven percent of adults in the U. S. holding a master's level degree, two percent possessing a professional degree such as a medical or law degree, and less than one percent of the population having earned a doctor's degree (Horn & Berger, 2004).

Contemporary Statistics Relating to Teachers

According to the U. S. Department of Education (2004), elementary and secondary school teachers in the U. S. numbered 3.5 million. Public school teachers numbered 3.1 million in 2004 while the remaining 400,000 worked in private schools. Statistics from 2004 reflected that female teachers outnumbered their male colleagues roughly three to one. The U. S. Department of Education further reports that the vast majority of elementary and secondary teachers in the United States are Caucasian (2.5 million). Statistics from 2004 showed that black educators numbered approximately 227,000 and teachers of Hispanic origin numbered just over 169,000. The remaining 75,000 educators identified themselves as being of Asian/Pacific or American Indian lineage. Despite such imbalance in teacher ethnicity, the teacher workforce is growing ever more ethnically diverse (U. S. Department of Education, 2004).

As of 2004 the U. S. Department of Education reported the following information relating to age distributions for public school teachers: overall, educators in the United States reflect an aged teaching population with 953,000 practicing teachers between the ages of 40 and 49; teachers aged 50 to 59 comprised the second most populous age category for teachers in the United States with a population of approximately 800,000; U. S. teachers aged 30 to 39 numbered approximately 660,000, while teachers under 30 were 503,000; teachers over age 60 comprised the least populous age category for full time teachers in the U. S. in 2004 registering at just over 90,000 teachers.

A U. S. Department of Education examination of public school teachers' area of practice in 2004 revealed that slightly more teachers practiced at the elementary level (1.6 million) than at the secondary level (1.4 million). Among elementary level teachers, one million practiced in a general classroom environment in which all academic subjects were

taught. English teachers in the elementary setting numbered just over 33,000 while practitioners of math instruction numbered 26,000. Special education teachers numbered over 210,000 in U. S. elementary schools in 2004. Elementary teachers in accelerated instruction programs and non-academic subject areas such as physical education, art, and music numbered 314,000 (U. S. Department of Education, 2004).

Secondary level educators in the United States numbered 1.4 million in the U. S. Department of Education's 2004 report. Of these 1.4 million teachers, 235,000 taught English, 191,000 were math instructors 160,000 practiced in science classrooms, and 147,000 taught in one of the social sciences. Special education teachers numbered 99,000 at the secondary level as of 2004. The vocational and technical fields of instruction were populated by 125,000 teachers in 2004. Finally, teachers practicing in nonacademic subject areas such as physical education, art, music and accelerated academic programs numbered 441,000 teachers in 2004. As of 2004, private schools in the United States employed approximately 450,000 teachers. Sex, age, race and subject distributions among the population of private school teachers reflect similar proportions found among public school teachers (U. S. Department of Education, 2004).

The National Center for Education Information (NCEI) (2004) reports that of the 3.1 million teachers practicing in the United States in 2004, 2.85 million received their teacher certification by completing a traditional teacher preparation program through a college or university. The remaining 250,000 teachers have secured certification through alternative certification avenues. The NCEI (2004) projects that as many as 35,000 new teachers will enter the U. S. education system each year through alternative certification programs such as Georgia's Teacher Alternative Preparation program (TAPP).

The educational attainment of teachers as indicated by the level of degree attained is one measure that is often cited as an indicator of teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2006) in its Digest of Educational Statistics Tables and Figures provides a report of the education attainment of public school teachers as of 2005. According to the NCES, as of 2005, 52 percent of public school teachers held only a bachelor's degree, 42.1 percent held a master's degree, 4.7 percent held an education specialist's degree and .07% were reported as holding a doctor's degree. These same statistics reported for the state of Georgia reflect a similar distribution with 50.1 percent of Georgia's teachers holding only a bachelor's degree, 37.6 were reported as holding a master's degree, a slightly higher than the national average 10.8 percent held an education specialist's degree and .04 percent of Georgia's teachers were reported as holding a doctor's degree.

Increases in school aged populations in the United States and improvements in the ability to identify students' individual academic needs have increased the need for teachers in both the general and special education settings. In response to these trends, between 1994 and 2004 the number of elementary and secondary level teachers in the U. S. rose by 20% (NCES, 2006). Despite such increases in teacher populations, critical teacher shortages still exist in many fields of education (U. S. Department of Education, 2004).

Teacher Shortages

The terms *teacher turnover* and *teacher attrition* are very similar in their definition and are therefore often used interchangeably. According to Billingsley (1993), special education teacher attrition occurs any time a teacher transfers to another special

education teaching position between school districts, transfers from a special education to a general education teaching position, or leaves the field of education altogether (known as exit attrition). Likewise, the term teacher turnover relates to the phenomenon of teachers vacating their teaching position. The distinction is made by Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) that *turnover* can be termed as *mobility* or movement within the field of education but does not correspond with exit attrition.

The implications that are associated with teachers' exit attrition are obviously unfavorable. From some perspectives, especially those found in smaller school districts, teacher turnover can be seen as not only as a curse but also as a blessing. The hiring of novice teachers to replace departed veterans may be seen as more economically advantageous occurrence in school districts that face serious budgetary constraints. This advantageous gain in vitality that is brought about by the introduction of new teachers is however, often outweighed by the disadvantages associated with the loss of experienced teachers (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002).

Each year, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) presents an analysis entitled *The Condition of Education in the United States*. Each year in its *Condition* report, the NCES focuses on a contemporary topic of interest to the field of education. The 2005 issuance of *The Condition of Education in the United States* reflected a focus on mobility in the teacher workforce. Through their examination of the results of the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the 1999-2000 Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS), the NCES provides the most recent and comprehensive sources of national teacher employment data. Information taken from the SASS indicated that U.S. schools lost 550,000 or approximately 16 % of their total workforce during the

1999-2000 school year. Further analysis of these data records show that 270,000 or seven percent of these 550,000 teachers transferred to other schools while the remaining 230,000 teachers or eight percent left the teaching profession. Of these 230,000 teachers, two percent of these teachers left the profession as a result of retirement while the remaining six percent left before retirement had been reached (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

National statistics reflect teacher shortages in several fields of the education profession. Personnel needs are greatest in the areas of special education, mathematics, science, bilingual education, and English as a second language (Carlson, Schroll & Klein, 2001; National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse, 2005). These shortages are even more pronounced in highly urban and rural communities. Among the most critical shortages in education are those found in special education. Statistics reveal that 98% of U. S. school districts are reporting shortages in special education areas in some capacity (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). In 2003, a surprising 33,000 special education teaching positions were reported as staffed by uncertified teachers while an additional 4,0000 positions were left vacant (National Education Association, 2005).

Special Education

History of Special Education

From ancient through contemporary times, human beings have expressed an aversion to individuals who have physical and mental differences or who are chronically or terminally ill (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997). A cultural denial of the processes of aging and death most likely account for such feelings of misgiving according to Clapton and Fitzgerald. Unfortunately, throughout history, such feelings of aversion have often been

generalized to individuals with exceptionalities and have resulted in their subsequent social rejection and mistreatment. It was such sentiment that led to the exclusion of individuals with special needs from educational opportunities for centuries (Gelb, 1997).

Gaining societal acceptance for individuals with differences has and continues to be a hard fought conflict whose battles have been characterized by misunderstanding and discrimination (Goodman, 2003). Until two centuries ago when a more accurate medical understanding of disabilities was developed, it was widely accepted that individuals with exceptionalities were afflicted with supernatural possession or evil spirits (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 2004). Such erroneous accusations resulted in the cruel mistreatment of individuals with exceptionalities (Albrecht, 1992). Adults with disabilities were considered to be child-like in their behavior and intellectual capacity. As a result of such thinking, attempts to educate individuals with disabilities were forsaken (Winzer, 1993).

The education of individuals with exceptionalities experienced a period of relative enlightenment beginning in the 18th century (Copeland, 1995). Heightened understanding and acceptance of individuals with exceptionalities emerged beginning with the notable work of French physicians Jean Itard and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Both Itard and Rousseau's work stimulated modern educational theory and brought forth a focus on the developmental needs of individuals of all ability levels (Marsh, McFadden & McGhee, 2000). The work of both great French educators served as a catalyst for the work of American educators such as John Dewey who stressed the importance of establishing schools that are child centered, promote self-realization, and assist the child in assuming an appropriate role in society (Vasta, 2004). Dewey also stressed

individualization of instruction, which is one of the major tenants of contemporary special education (Sanford & Sanford, 1996).

In the mid-twentieth century around the time of the death of John Dewey, the most significant decision in American education history was made (National Council on Disability, 2004). The landmark *Brown v. Topeka, Kansas Board of Education* litigation was concluded in 1954. The ruling in the *Brown* case guaranteed education as a civil right that would be enjoyed by all (Cozzens, 1995). The development of education for learners with exceptional needs has closely paralleled the civil rights movements that brought about an increased sense of acceptance of individuals with differences (Borden and Borden, 2000). In the wake of the *Brown v. Topeka, Kansas Board of Education* decision and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, advocacy groups emerged and fought to bring the rights of individuals with exceptionalities onto a national stage of exposure (Borden & Borden 2000).

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the education of individuals with exceptionalities experienced further enlightenment (San Francisco State University Office of Human Relations, 2005). President John F. Kennedy, whose sibling Rosemary was an individual with exceptional needs, publicly embraced the movement for disability rights and provided the movement with much needed political support (Borden & Borden 2000). Not quite a decade later in 1972, monumental decisions were made in the cases of *Mills v. Board of Education* and *Parents of Retarded Citizens (PARC) v. Pennsylvania* both of which struck down various state laws that excluded disabled children from receiving an education in public schools (San Francisco State University's Office of Human Relations, 1995). The *Mills* and *PARC* decisions, although made at the state

level, would prove to impact similar legislative decisions at a national level (National Council on Disability, 2005).

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is still recognized as a landmark legislative decision in the history of the treatment of individuals with exceptionalities in the United States (San Francisco State University Office of Human Relations, 2005). The wording of the Rehabilitation Act provides the initial, explicit language which prohibits discrimination towards individuals with disabilities (U. S. Department of Justice, 2005). The momentous legislative and judicial decisions of the early 1970s concerning the treatment of individuals with exceptionalities were cited by advocates during the public hearings which eventually lead to passage of the most significant special education-based legislation to date- Public Law 94-142.

Passage of Public Law-94-142 (PL 94-142) (The Education for all Handicapped Children Act (Guernsey & Klare, 1993) occurred in 1975 (San Francisco State University Office of Human Relations, 2005). PL 94-142 produced mandates which established that all individuals aged 3-21 would be entitled to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment possible. This legislation also guaranteed that the education of individuals with exceptionalities would be governed by Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). This landmark legislation also guaranteed that federal funding would be available for state programs that support special education (Weber, 1992).

The principles established by PL 94-142 were reinforced and amended by the 1990 passage of Public Law 101-476 (PL 101-476). PL 101-476 provided guidelines for adequate education planning and life planning for individuals with exceptionalities and expanded special education coverage to include students with traumatic brain injuries,

students with autism, and all other students ages 3 through 21 who met special education eligibility criteria (Yell, 2004).. A reauthorization of PL 101-476 occurred in 1997 which provided for increased decision making authority for parents and students in relation to the development of Individualized Education Plans (Yell, 2004). Further expansion of special education services allowing for inclusion of students with Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder as well as the establishment of disciplinary guidelines to be used with students with exceptionalities were the results of PL 101-476 (Yell, 2004).

Through the evolution of special education, from the inhumane treatments of centuries ago, to the fully inclusive and appropriate mandates of today, one constant factor has always existed. There have always been individuals who have been committed to working with individuals with special education needs. As the education of individuals with disabilities became more appropriate and widely available, the number of trained educators to work with this group of American youth grew (McLeskey, Tyler & Flippin, 2004). Also, the growth of special education student populations has been attributed to improvements in methods of student needs identification (Office of Special Education Programs, 2002a). The increase in the number of students who are served through special education programs has helped to fuel the increases in special education teacher job availability. The special education teacher population has not, however, grown in proportion to the number of special education students who are requiring special education support (Carlson, Schroll & Klein, 2001).

Special Educators

All 50 states including the District of Columbia require that special education practitioners hold valid licensure. The United States Department of Labor's 2004 Occupational Outlook Handbook reports that all 50 states require that special education teaching candidates hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree earned through the completion of an approved program of study from an accredited educational institution. The curriculum that prospective special education teachers must master consists of courses aimed at instructional issues as well as legal, psychological, and procedural courses related to the field of special education. Emergency and interim licensing programs are available in many states for special education teachers (United States Department of Labor, 2004).

In response to both the demand for highly qualified teachers in U. S. classrooms and the critical teacher shortages that have plagued U. S. schools, alternative certification programs have emerged. Emergency and alternative certification avenues have provided short-term relief for special educator deficiencies (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). Alternative certification avenues have resulted in an immediate positive impact on teacher shortages in both general and special education, with four and a half percent of general educators and seven percent of special educators having received certification through alternative means (Katsiyannis, Zhang, & Conroy, 2003). The recent increases in the number of special educators being prepared for service through alternative certification programs has been illustrated in the research of Kasiyannis, Zhang and Conroy who offer that ten percent of teachers of students with special needs who have less than five years of experience have sought certification through alternative means.

Alternative certification programs vary in their scope and requirements from state to state. The state of Georgia's alternative route to certification is referred to as the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP). According to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (2006), in order to receive licensure through the Georgia TAPP program, prospective teachers are required to satisfy the following requirements: hold a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in any area of concentration, must accrue an adequate grade point average in all college work attempted (cumulative 2.5 or higher), must pass one of the PRAXIS series of teacher readiness exams, which examines basic academic skills as well as pass the *Praxis II* test which measures general and subject-specific knowledge and teaching skills in his or her area of licensure (Educational Testing Services, 2006).

Special education teachers receive licensure to offer instruction in either pre-kindergarten or kindergarten through grade twelve depending on the state of licensure. Special education teachers also receive training in one or more areas of specialization. These areas of specialization correspond to the many different areas under which students with exceptionalities may qualify for special education services and in which special education teachers may specialize (see Appendix A) (United States Department of Labor, 2004).

Special education teachers, like all teachers, are responsible for planning and implementing instruction for their students. However, special education teachers face an added challenge of modifying and delivering their curriculum so that it meets the various individualized instructional needs of their students (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank & Leal, 1999). The individualized instruction that exceptional needs learners require is

coordinated through the development and implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) (Strickland and Turnbull, 1990). IEPs are federally mandated documents that must be developed for all students who qualify for special education services (Yell, 1998). IEPs describe the behavioral and academic modifications that govern the education of students who are served through special education programs (Drasgow, Yell & Robinson, 2001). IEPs also contain specific goals and objectives toward which special education students work. Special education teachers are also often responsible for the development of documents and reports that relate to IEPs. Individualized Transition Plans (ITPs) are one such IEP-related report. ITPs help to coordinate the post-school living outcomes for exceptional needs learners (O'Shea, O'Shea & Algozzine, 1998). Post-school living outcomes for students may include employment, post-secondary education, independent living needs, and community participation opportunities (Strickland, Turnbull, 1990).

The challenge of shouldering the responsibility for the delivery of effective instruction as well as individualized planning for students contributes to the role of special education teacher as being very demanding. Such high demands are often thought of as contributing factors to special education's status as an area of critical teacher shortage (McLeskey, Tyler & Flippin, 2004). Recent evidence suggests that math, science, foreign language and the demanding field of special education are certification areas in which critical teacher shortages exist (Zabel & Zabel, 2001; Holloway, 2003). The teacher shortage problem within the field of special education has been a challenge that has been recognized by legislators and administrators for decades (Brownell, Hirsch & Seo, 2004).

A Critical Shortage- Special Educators

Since the early 1990s, special education programs have seen a dramatic increase in the number of students who qualify for special education services and support (U. S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, 2004b). Such dramatic numbers of eligible students have been attributed to increased efforts to identify students who meet special education eligibility criteria and also to the establishment of more inclusive eligibility criteria for special education programs (Crockett & Kaufman, 1999).

Contributing to the increased number of students who qualify for special education service was the 1990 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2005). According to the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, one of the tenants of IDEA which served to broaden eligibility criteria was the inclusion of Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury as conditions that if manifested would qualify students to receive services through special education programs. As a result of its 1990 reauthorization and related expansion of eligibility criteria, an additional half a million additional students have been entered into special education programs under IDEA's reauthorized guidelines (U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004b).

Despite contemporary increases in special educator preparation and entrance into the field of special education, Mcleskey, Tyler & Flippin (2004) report that the dramatic influx of students into special education programs has established a pace that cannot be matched by teacher induction efforts. The resulting discrepancy in teacher supply and

demand has been a major contributing factor to the current critical teacher shortage in special education. Intensifying the critical nature of the special education teacher shortage is the disturbing rate at which exit behavior is found among special educators (Billingsley, 2004).

Of all teachers, those holding certification in the area of special education are most likely to leave their field of service (Boehner, 2003). Defectors from the field of special education are not all choosing to follow new occupational paths, but instead, many are seeking out positions in general education or in other educational service areas (Katsiyannis, Zhang & Conroy, 2003). In fact, research by Katsiyannis, Zhang & Conroy (2003) suggests that far more movement is found among teachers from the ranks of special education teachers to general education than from general education to the field of special education. Other research efforts have replicated the findings of Katsiyannis, Zhang & Conroy by producing reports that indicate that teacher attrition occurs among special educators at rates that are disproportionately higher than those found among their general education counterparts (Boe, Cook, Bobbitt and Weaver, 1995; Stempien & Loeb, 2002). Annual attrition rates for special educators and general educators have been reported to be as high as 13% and nine percent respectively (Boe, Cook, et al., 1996).

Discussions of teacher shortages and teacher's career decisions, especially when concerned with exit behavior, often employ the use of the terms *burnout* and *attrition*. Although the two terms *burnout* and *attrition* are often used interchangeably, distinction should be made between the two terms. *Burnout*, as defined by Maslach (1982), describes feelings of exhaustion, powerlessness, and depersonalization. Research by Frank and McKenzie (1993) has indicated that during their first five years, teachers of

students with exceptional needs experience slow but steady increases in levels of emotional exhaustion which often result in burnout.

Burnout and the associated feelings of exhaustion and powerlessness can result in teacher *attrition* (Inman & Marlow, 2004). The term *attrition* is used to describe the phenomenon of voluntary resignation among employees (Stempien & Loeb, 2002) which may occur through movement between teacher certification areas or through departure from the field of education altogether (Billingsley, 2004). The significant impact of special educator attrition and retention on the already critical special education teacher shortage has been recognized by researchers and has generated a healthy body of research aimed at establishing a better understanding of the phenomenon of special educator's career decisions.

Factors that Influence the Career Decisions of Special Educators

The factors that influence the career decisions of special education teachers have been the subject of numerous research efforts. Research efforts have been so plentiful and variable in their methodology that conceptual frameworks have been developed to summarize and analyze the related body of knowledge. A systemic conceptual framework model proposed by Brownell and Smith (1993) employs four proposed systems that encapsulate and produce the factors that influence the career decisions of special educators.

The first component of Brownell and Smith's model is the *microsystem*. In the Brownell and Smith model, the microsystem corresponds to the teacher's immediate working environment and all of the interactions that occur between students and teachers. The concept of the *mesosystem* is used to represent the professional interactions that exist

in the workplace such as collegiality and administrative support. Brownell and Smith's *exosystem* corresponds to external influences on special educators' career decisions, such as social structures and the socioeconomic level of a community. Finally, Brownell and Smiths' proposed *macrosystem* is comprised of the cultural beliefs and ideologies of the dominant culture and schools' as well as the economic conditions in which teachers practice.

Another conceptual framework proposed by Billingsley (1993) provides yet another often cited model that depicts the factors that influence the career decisions of special educators. Through a meta-analysis of contemporary examinations of special educators' career decisions, Billingsley identified the factors that are most often reported to have influence on the career decisions of special educators. Billingsley has proposed a tri-categorical representation consisting of external factors, employment related factors, and personal factors.

External Factors

Billingsley's (1993) category of external factors of influence on the career decisions of special educators embodies societal and economic influences. Societal influences and large scale economic influences are suggested to have indirect influences on the career decisions of special educators and therefore are considered to have little immediate impact on the career decisions of special education teachers (Billingsley, 2004; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener & Weber, 1997). Variables external to the teacher and the school district such as retirement incentives, alternatives outside of teaching, availability of other teaching positions, and employment climate are other factors

identified by Miller, Brownell, and Smith (1999) as external influences on special educator's career decisions.

Employment-related Factors

Employment-related factors of influence on the career decisions of special educators are those factors that relate directly to teachers' working environment (Billingsley, 2004). Billingsley identifies teachers' professional qualifications as the conditions under which teachers work, their schedules of reward and level of commitment to their school, district, teaching field, and their profession all as examples of employment related factors that influence special educators' career decisions. Westling and Whitten (1996) have also compiled information pertaining to the employment-related factors of influence on special educators' career decisions offering that clearly defined responsibilities, adequate time to prepare paperwork, plan instruction and prepare materials as well as the presence of teacher-agreement with program goals are all employment-related factors of influence on the career decisions of special educators.

Research examining the influence of the work environment on teachers' career decisions has most often sought to examine the experiences of general educators rather than specifically of special educators. A comparison of studies of work related factors and their influence on general and special educators reveals similar findings. Factors relating to the work environment have been found to have a significant influence on job satisfaction levels and subsequent career decisions for both general and special education teachers (Singer, 1992; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener & Weber, 1997; Miller, Brownell and Smith, 1999; Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001). The work-related

factors that impact special education teachers' career decisions are numerous. Work-related factors such as salary, school climate, administrative and collegial support, mentoring opportunities, the role of the teacher, factors relating to paperwork, students and caseloads, professional development, and service delivery models have all been considered as influences on special educators' career decisions (Billingsley, 2004).

Salary. Teachers' salaries are most often based on a graduated scale with pay-steps determined by incentives such as length of credible service and degree attainment. In public school systems, teacher's salaries are state-funded but are often supplemented by additional monies based on local county salary supplement scales that are in turn based on experience levels and degree attainment (Haberman, 2005). Teachers' salaries as a determinant of career longevity have been examined in several research efforts. A study conducted nationally found that special education teachers with comparatively high salaries were also found to demonstrate heightened career longevity (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, et al., 1997). Similar research findings were reported by Singer (1992) and Miller, Brownell and Smith (1999), who all found that special educators with higher paying jobs were more likely to display longevity of service. An attrition oriented research effort by Billingsley et al. (1995) found that ten percent of the examined special educators who left teaching positions reported that they left their profession due to inadequate salaries. Such compensatory issues have been found to be an important consideration for teachers when making career decisions in Choy, Chen, Geis & Alt's 1997 study as well. Further evidence of this salary-teacher sustainability relationship can be found in Henke's 1997 study which found that districts with low funding and how teacher salary supplements had greater teacher turnover.

School climate. The findings of four major special education teacher attrition related studies suggest that school climate is often an influence on teachers' career intentions (U. S. Department of Education, 2002; Billingsley, Carlson, & Klein, in press; Miller et al., 1999; Kelley & Thornton, 2005). More specifically, these three studies all indicate that teachers who maintain more positive views of their school climate are more likely to remain in their field of service than those teachers who possess less positive views. *Climate* as defined in these studies refers to an interaction between all of the following components: the morale of the staff at the school, administrative behavior and support, availability of materials, the level of cooperation among staff members, and teachers' feelings of "belonging" to the school program (Billingsley, 2004).

Support. The concept of *support* is not easily defined as it may be multidimensional and situational in nature. Relative to educational research, support has been categorized as being of either an emotional or instrumental type in the 1994 research of Littrell, Billingsley, and Cross. Littrell et al.'s 1994 study reported that emotional forms of support (e. g. showing interest in teachers' work, showing appreciation for teachers' effort, and maintaining open communication) by principals were rated by special educators as most important to them. Instrumental support (e.g. providing needed materials, ensuring needed planning and preparation time) was found to correlate positively with job satisfaction and school commitment as well (Littrell et al., 1994). In her 2004 examination of special educators' career decisions, Billingsley described support for special educators in terms of either administrative or collegial.

Administrative support. Adequate support from administrators has been shown time and time again to be a significant determining factor in the career decisions of

special education teachers (Boe, Cook, Bobbitt & Weber, 1998; Gertsen, et al., 2001; Kelley & Thornton, 2005). The relationship between teachers' perceived degree of administrative support and their longevity of service has been described in the research of Boe, Barkanic, et al. (1999). Boe, Barkanic, et al. found that teachers who stayed in their position were nearly four times more likely to rate their administrators' behavior as supportive than teachers who chose to leave their profession.

In an attrition oriented examination of perceived administrative support, Kelley & Thornton (2005) reached similar conclusions finding that attrition rates among special education teachers were significantly related to ratings of administrative support. George, George, Gersten and Grosenick's 1995 study found that special education teachers who rated their level of supervisory support as "adequate" or better were more likely to indicate a desire to return to teaching the following year. These findings have been replicated in a study by Billingsley and Cross (1992) in which general and special education teachers who reported receiving high levels of support from their principal also reported lower levels of stress and greater job satisfaction and commitment.

While investigating incentives to teach in the field of special education, Schnorr (1995) reported that the top rated incentive was a high level of support by the principal. This is in direct conflict with the findings of Miller et al.'s 1999 investigation of factors that influence the staying or leaving of special education teachers in their field of service. Miller et al. found no significant relationship between support by principals and teacher attrition. Differences in methods of analyses or research design might account for such a discrepancy in findings.

Singh and Billingsley's (1998) research suggested that an examination of the principal's individual role as the sole agent of support for teachers is inadequate in that it minimizes the role of the school-wide support network. Gertsen et al. (2001) offered that a school-wide support network consists of an interaction between all of a school's employees. Gertsen et al. do not underestimate the significance of the role of the building principal but rather recognize the cumulative impact of the many sources that contribute to the system of teacher support that exists in a school community (e.g. support of principal, assistant principal, fellow teachers, parents, paraprofessionals, other service providers).

Administrative support for special education teachers from central office personnel has been investigated as a factor of influence in career decisions as well. Gertsen et al. (2001) report that central office personnel have an indirect influence on the career decisions of teachers through their involvement with teachers' job design and professional learning. In an earlier 1995 study, special educators and general educators in urban settings were polled to determine their ratings of satisfaction for administrative support at various levels (Billingsley et al., 1995). Differences in satisfaction ratings were found between special educators and general educators. Special educators reported greater levels of dissatisfaction with central office administration than with principals while general education teacher's satisfaction ratings were the opposite. Special educators reported greater overall dissatisfaction with the degree of central office administrative support with dissatisfaction ratings that were nearly twice as high as those reported by general education teachers. Billingsley (2004) suggests that special educators' dissatisfaction with central office personnel is not surprising since central

office administrators are responsible for the establishment of system special education policies, for the enforcement of IDEA principles, and for the placement and evaluation of students who receive special education services.

Collegial support. While the role of administrative support in influencing teachers' job satisfaction has been thoroughly researched, the role of collegial support has received less attention in research efforts. What little research that has been conducted with a focus on the role of collegial support in teachers' job satisfaction, has produced inconclusive results. Research conducted by Miller et al. in 1999 suggested that lower levels of perceived collegial support were associated with attrition among teachers while higher levels of perceived support were associated with staying. Billingsley's 1995 study of 99 teachers who left teaching positions in an urban setting found that only 4 of the 99 indicated that collegial support issues played a role in their decision to leave. Earlier research by Billingsley et al. (1992) examining 42 teachers who were leaving their position found that none of the leavers attributed any of their decision to leave to collegial support issues.

Mentoring. Support through mentoring is critically important to the success and subsequent career longevity of fledgling general and special educators who as novices are at risk for early career burnout (Billingsley, 2003 and Rosenberg, Griffin, Kilgore, and Carpenter, 1997). Inexperienced teachers in all fields of education initially require time and support from veteran educators in order to become accomplished instructors, effective classroom managers, and capable communicators with parents and colleagues (Gold, 1996). Considering that teachers in the field of special education face additional duties and responsibilities in their career such as the development and implementation of

their students' Individualized Education Plans, conduction of related meetings and completion of required paperwork, this period of job acclimation and adjustment can be even more formidable for special educators (Boyer & Gillespie, 2000).

The relationship between mentoring support and the career decisions of special educators has been described in two recent studies by Whitaker (2000) and Billingsley et al. (1995). In Whitaker's study the perceived effectiveness of mentoring support was found to be significantly correlated with special educators' job satisfaction ratings and intentions to remain in their field of service. These findings are not in agreement with Billingsley et al.'s results which indicated that satisfaction with mentoring was not correlated with career intentions. However, those in Billingsley et al.'s study who responded as having more favorable mentoring experiences were more likely to rate their roles as manageable, to have more confidence in their ability to work with students who present serious difficulties, and to express more confidence in their ability to develop and implement appropriate Individualized Education Plans than those respondents who expressed less favorable opinions of mentoring. The difference in findings between Whitaker and Billingsley et al.'s studies may be attributed to the researchers' use of different populations and measurements. For example, the long-term career intentions of special educators was of interest in the Billingsley et al. study while the Whitaker study sought to examine short term, one to five year projections regarding career intentions (Billingsley, 2003). One issue of agreement found in both the Whitaker and Billingsley et al. studies' findings was the greater perceived worth of informal mentors over formal mentors as measured by the response of teachers.

Role problems. The critical role that special education teachers play in our education system is often defined by its inherently stressful demands (Billingsley, 2003). The role related stressors that accompany the experience of being a special education teacher have been identified as factors of influence in special educators' career decisions (Billingsley, et al. 1995). One third of the respondents in a 1995 study of special educator's career decisions conducted by Morvant, Gersten, Gillman, Keating & Blake expressed that conflict among goals and expectations in their roles contributed to work-related stress. As a result of our nation's current focus on performance-related accountability for schools, the focus on the role of the special education teacher can be expected to place even greater demands on the already stressful role of the special educator (Blackwell, 2004).

Paperwork. A significant amount of paperwork is required to describe the unique learning needs of each student on a special educator's caseload (Billingsley, 2004). Workload manageability has been specifically cited in a 1995 study by Morvant et al. as a frequent source of stress for special education teachers. Half of the special educators polled by Morvant et al. indicated that their workload demands were unreasonable while 68% of the respondents indicated that they had too little time to complete necessary work. In Billingsley et al.'s 1995 examination of factors of influence on the career decisions of special educators, an analysis of special educators' responses to open-ended questions concerning the demands of paperwork produced the following negative descriptors and comments- "overwhelming", "unnecessary", "redundant", "intimidating", "not enough time to complete the required paperwork," "too much pressure to complete paperwork," "paperwork requirements appear inconsistent or unnecessary."

In order to aide in the planning and implementation of exceptional needs learners' Individualized Education Plans, it is necessary that a great deal of documentation and assessment be made (Kamens, 2004). Such paperwork, that is intended to serve as an aid for educating special needs students, can be a source of significant employment-related stress (Billingsley et al., 1993, Billingsley et al., 1995, Brownell et al., 1994-1995, George et al., 1995, Morvant et al., 1995, Schnorr, 1995, Westling and Whitney, 1996). The Paperwork for Special Education Study conducted in 2002 by the U. S. Office of Special Education Programs found that after controlling for other factors, paperwork demands were significantly related to special educators' intent to leave their field of service. "Has adequate time to prepare paperwork" was a response item that was rated significantly lower by those respondents who planned to leave rather than stay in the field of special education service (U. S. Office of Special Education Programs, 2002). Respondents in special education studies have continually reported that paperwork demands are of significant influence in their career decisions (Schnorr, 1995; Billingsley et al., 1995).

The United States Office of Special Education Programs (2002) has reported that special educators (35%) more than general educators (13%) have indicated that paperwork demands have a negative impact on their ability to offer effective instruction. In the United States Office of Special Education Programs 2002 study, special education teachers indicated that the completion of necessary paperwork interferes in their instruction "frequently", with most reporting that they invested a comparable amount of time completing paperwork and preparing for instruction (U. S. Office of Special Education Programs, 2002).

According to Billingsley (2004), issues of program design may influence special educators' attitudes regarding paperwork manageability. Different school systems at the state and local level coordinate special education paperwork responsibilities differently (Paul, Lavelly, Cranston-Gingras, & Taylor, 2002). Teachers working in systems or schools in which other entities such as school psychologists or lead teachers assist in the preparation of paperwork are less likely to be affected by the stress-producing demands of paperwork than teachers who have little or no help with paperwork preparation (Billingsley, 2003).

Caseloads. A special educator's *caseload* describes the number of students whom a special education teacher serves (Russ, Chiang, Rylance & Bongers, 2001). The term caseload may also be employed to describe the categories of exceptionalities (disabilities) that may be manifested among a special educator's students (Miller, Brownell & Smith, 1999). Both the number of students served on a special educator's caseload as well as the characteristics of students served on a special educator's caseload have been shown to impact the career decisions of special educators (Billingsley, 2004).

Teachers consistently report caseload size as a reason for job dissatisfaction (Billingsley et al., 1993, Billingsley, 1995, Morvant et al., 1995 & Schnorr, 1995, Russ, Chiang, Rylance, & Bongers, 2001). Billingsley et al.'s 1995 examination of special education teachers who left their field of service found that 33 % of respondents suggested that caseloads were too large while 28 % indicated feelings that students were misplaced in special education services, thus affecting their caseload size.

While the number of students on teachers' caseloads has been identified as an issue of concern, the characteristics of students on teachers' caseloads has been linked to

attrition decisions as well (Billingsley, 2003). National statistics reflect that 80% of special education teachers work with students with two or more exceptionalities, while 32% of these teachers work with students who have four or more exceptionalities (Mcleskey, Tyler & Flippin, 2004). Such variance of exceptionality across and within student populations can translate into meaningful challenges for special educators (Mastropieri, 2001). Carlson and Billingsley (2001) found that of the teachers whom they interviewed, those who most often expressed an intention to leave their fields of service immediately were those who had students with four or more primary exceptionalities on their caseloads.

Miller, Brownell, and Smith (1999) found that teachers of students with multiple disabilities, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, and mental retardation were least likely to leave the field of special education service. Teachers of students with emotional behavior disorders were slightly more likely to leave while teachers of students with visual, hearing and speech impairments were most likely to leave. Miller, Brownell, and Smith suggest that teachers of students with vision, hearing and speech impairments were prone to leave their field of service due most often to job opportunities that exist outside the field of education and may not necessarily have because of dissatisfaction with their teaching position.

Student Relationships. Numerous studies have demonstrated the relationship between general education teachers' attrition and problems relating to students' behavior. Discipline problems have been identified as significant influences on teachers' career decisions in research conducted by Billingsley et al., 1993; Billingsley et al., 1995; Brownell et al., 1994-1995; Brownell et al. 1997. Student discipline problems have been

linked to teacher attrition consistently (Billingsley et al., 1993; Billingsley et al., 1995; Brownell et al., 1994-1995; Brownell et al., 1997). Student discipline problems and a lack of student motivation were linked to dissatisfaction and subsequent burnout among general education teachers in Ingersol's 2001 study. The relativity of these findings to special educators and their experience is as of yet unknown (Billingsley, 2003). Students' attitudes (George et al., 1995), level of students' progress (Billingsley et al., 1995; Brownell et al., 1994-1995) and safety issues (Billingsley et al., 1995; Brownell et al., 1997) have all been identified as factors of influence as well. Surprisingly, the same conclusions cannot be made for attrition among special education teachers. Neither Miller et al. (1995) nor Billingsley et al. (1995) found that student relationships were as significant at predicting attrition among special educators as other factors such as inadequate administrative support. These findings are in contradiction with findings produced by Westling and Whitten (1990) who did find that student-related issues as well as lack of administrative support, caseload and role problems were all significant predictors of attrition among special educators.

Service delivery models. The role of the special education teacher is defined in part by the service delivery model in which the teacher operates and by the exceptionalities that the teachers' students manifest (Russ, Chiang, Rylance & Bongers, 2001). Teachers in resource classroom settings may face quite different duties from teachers who teach in self-contained settings, who in turn have duties that differ greatly from teachers of inclusion classes (Conderman & Katsiyannis, 2002). Few conclusions can be made about the relationship of service delivery models to rates of teacher attrition (Billingsley, 2003).

Self-contained classrooms in which students with Emotional Behavior Disorders are served have shown the highest overall rate of teacher attrition (Billingsley, 2004). The following rank-ordering from greatest to least describes the rates of teacher burnout in various self-contained classrooms defined by the different primary exceptionalities that are served therein: Multicategorical, Severe and Profound Intellectual Exceptionalities, Learning Exceptionalities, and Mild and Moderate Intellectual Exceptionalities (Billingsley, 2004). It should be noted that although the aforementioned fields of special education service trail the Emotional Behavior Disorders field in frequency of teacher attrition, the disparity in overall teacher turnover between the fields is minimal (Billingsley, 2004). All fields in the area of special education are considered to be facing considerable teacher shortages (Brownell, 2005).

The recent efforts to move toward more inclusive education for students with special needs may have caused some teachers to struggle with the associated changes in responsibilities (Billingsley, 2003). Teachers in a 1995 study indicated that they desired to be engaged in more direct instruction opportunities rather than in the collaborative planning activities that are associated with inclusion models of instruction (Morvant et al. 1993). These findings are supported by the more recent research of Embich (2001), which suggests that special education teachers who worked primarily in inclusion service delivery models were more at risk of burnout than teachers who operated in more traditional special education settings such as resource and self-contained classes.

Affective response to work. The work environment-related problems that special educators often face, can lead to problematic affective responses (Billingsley, 2004) which impact their career decisions (Ng, Eby, Sorensen & Feldman, 2005). Increased

stress levels, decreased job satisfaction ratings, and reduced organizational and professional commitment are all examples of such problematic affective responses (Billingsley, 2004). Teachers who work in environments that are defined by too many students, too much paperwork, too few resources, and a lack of administrative support may experience a denial of the intrinsic rewards that many teachers require in order to maintain their job-related commitment and effort (Billingsley et al., 1995).

Stress. Stress and perceived stress have time and time again, through research, been shown to be efficient predictors of attrition among special education teachers (Miller et al., 1999; Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Cross & Billingsley, 1994; Gertsen, et al., 2001; Morvant et al., 1995; Schnorr, 1995; Singh & Billingsley, 1996). Morvant et al. report that 80% of those teachers who planned to leave the field of special education indicated that they worked each day in highly stressful environments. In addition, Morvant et al. found that special education teachers who indicated a desire to depart from their field of service offered significantly higher ratings of stress resulting from the range and types of students' needs, administrative requirements, and conflict among expectations, goals, and objectives when compared to the ratings of teachers who desired to remain in service.

Personal Factors

Studies of special education teachers' career decisions have often included in their examinations consideration for teachers' demographic factors (Office of Special Education Programs, 2002b). Data relative to teachers' age, gender, race, certification level, and academic ability are quantitative in nature and therefore allow for few causal assumptions to be made (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001; Jonassen, 2004).

Age. Of the personal demographic factors that have been studied in association with special educator attrition, age is the only demographic variable that has been consistently linked to attrition (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook & Whitener, 1997; Cross & Billingsley, 1994; Morvant et al., 1995). A “U” shaped graphic can be employed to represent the age-related tendencies of special educator attrition (Guarino, Santibanez, Daley & Brewer, 2004). Younger teachers and teachers who have nearly satisfied their retirement criteria have been found to be most prone to departure from service in the field of special education (Miller et al., 1999).

With new avenues for the attainment of teaching certificates now available, the special education teacher workforce is becoming more diverse (Tyler, Yzquierdo, Lopez-Reyna & Flippin, 2004). The new found diversity in the special education workforce is most apparent when considering the increased number of older, non-traditional novice teachers entering the field of service (Billingsley & Mcleskey, 2004).

Gender. The role of gender in the career decisions of special educators has been the subject of only a handful of studies which have produced conflicting results (Billingsley, 2004). Neither national-scale (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook & Whitener, 1997) nor state level inquiries (Miller et al., 1999) have found a significant relationship between gender and special education teachers’ career decisions. Two studies in which gender and attrition among special education teachers were of interest conducted by Morvant et al. (1995) and Singer (1992) have produced highly specific yet non-substantial findings. Male special education teachers were found to be slightly more likely to leave their field of service than female counterparts in Morvant et al.’s 1995 study. Singer’s 1992 study of special educator’s demographics produced findings suggesting that younger female

teachers comprised the demographic sub-group that were most likely to fall victim to attrition.

Race. No significant attrition differences were found between teachers of different races in a national study conducted by Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, et al. (1997), or in state specific studies undertaken by Miller et al. (1999), Singer (1992) or Cross and Billingsley (1994).

Teacher qualification. Few comparisons have been made of special educators' professional qualifications and career decisions. The term "qualified" is somewhat ambiguous as the term is prone to individual interpretation (Blanton et al., 2002). Nevertheless, studies that purport to examine teacher "quality" and its role in the career decisions of special education teachers have sought to examine the following variables as indicators of teacher quality (Billingsley, 2004)- certification issues, degrees earned, academic achievement, and experience.

Certification. Stemming from the shortage of qualified special education teachers, a considerable number of special educators teach out of their field of certification or lack teacher certification at all (Miller et al., 1999). Such uncertified teachers have been found to succumb to attrition more often than their fully certified cohorts (Nougaret, 2002). Special educators who do not hold full and appropriate certification for their field of service are described by Boe, Bobbitt, Cook and Whitener (1997) as facing high risk for attrition.

Academic ability. Studies that are concerned with special educators' academic ability relative to their career decisions indicate that those teachers who possess greater academic ability as measured by competency tests are more likely to leave the profession

than their less able peers (Singer, 1992; Billingsley, 2004). These findings are particularly disturbing in that they not only add further confirmation of the special education teacher shortage but also indicate that the most academically talented teachers may be the teachers most likely to leave (Billingsley, 2004).

Researchers have also examined the level of education or degrees earned as factors relating to special educator retention and attrition (Billingsley, 2004). Retroactive attrition studies in which leavers were asked about their reasons for departure found no relationship between level of education and attrition among special education teachers (Billingsley, 2004). In comparison, two examinations of career intent did find that teachers with higher degrees were more likely to indicate plans to leave their field of service for opportunities outside of the field of education (Ross & Billingsley, 1994; Westling & Whitten, 1996).

Billingsley's 2004 research meta-analysis and 1993 conceptualization of the factors that influence the career decisions of special educators are nearly exhaustive in their attempts to quantify and present all relative factors of influence. Certainly, Billingsley's categories of *personal factors* and *employment related factors* constitute a wide range of variables that may influence special educators' retention and attrition. The personal factors of influence on special educators' career decisions alone represent a range of influences that may be just as numerous as the millions of special educators who practice in the United States. The influence of personal factors such as race, gender, age, certification area, educational attainment, and academic ability are all considered in Billingsley's 1993 conceptualization model. However, absent from Billingsley's model is consideration for the significance of special educators' emotional intelligence- an

ability-based concept that has been shown to be a far more powerful predictor of career success than academic ability alone.

The Unexplored Influence of Emotional Intelligence

Origins and Development of Emotional Intelligence

The concept of the Intelligence Quotient, or IQ, is central to any discussion relating to academic ability and the capacity for learning. For decades now, the concept of intelligence as described by IQ measures has been used as both a benchmark of learning capacity as well as a tool of assessment (Plucker, 2005). As measures and studies of intelligence have become more refined, more contemporary considerations of the concept of intelligence and ability have led to an expansion of the classically accepted model of intelligence (Gardner, 2002).

No longer is the term intelligence solely indicative of one's capacity to collect and apply knowledge in purely academic capacities (Gardner, 2002). In the early through mid-twentieth century, behaviorist researchers such as B.F. Skinner and John Watson coined the idea that humans were born as a "clean slate." Such a clean slate allowed for humans to be trained to learn anything as long as it was presented in an appropriate manner (Hall, 2005). For years this classically accepted theory influenced educational theory and subsequent teaching practices which offered instruction to fit everyone- assuming that everyone held the same capacity and preferred methods for learning (Gardner, 1989).

With Howard Gardner's 1983 proposal of the existence of "multiple intelligences" came another great shift in intelligence theory (Plucker, 2005). Gardner proposed the existence of many independent intelligences rather than a single all-

inclusive intelligence that can be measured and assigned a number. Basing his multiple intelligences theory on the fact that IQ measures examine only verbal, logical mathematical and spatial abilities, Gardner proposed that many other unconsidered attributes have influence on the unique abilities of individuals (New Horizons for Learning, 2005).

Initially, Gardner proposed the existence of seven intelligences: *visual, spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical, auditory-musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal* intelligences. More recently Gardner has proposed the existence of an eighth intelligence that he has termed *naturalist* intelligence (see appendix). Gardner's most recent work also provides for further expansion of his theory through his suggestion that additional intelligences may still yet exist in the form of spiritual and existential abilities (Smith, 2005).

Resembling a marriage of Gardner's proposed interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences is the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) (Pfeiffer, 2001). The first mention of the term *emotional intelligence* can be found in Wayne Payne's 1985 doctoral dissertation in which Payne considered the role of emotion in achievement (Hein, 2005). The earliest effort to establish a functional definition for the concept of emotional intelligence can be found in the 1990 work of John Mayer and Peter Salovey (Schutte & Malouff, 1999).

According to Mayer and Salovey (1990), EI is *the ability to process emotional information, particularly as it involves the perception, assimilation, understanding, and management of emotion*. (Mayer & Cobb, 2000). The competencies that are associated with emotional intelligence have been further expanded and defined through the research

of David Caruso (Hein, 2005) who offers that EI describes the ability to *accurately identify emotions, to use emotions to help you think, to understand what causes emotions and to manage to stay open to these emotions in order to capture the wisdom of our feelings* (Hein, 2005). Mayer and Salovey retain credit for first promoting the concept of emotional intelligence for academic consideration (Mayer & Salovey, 1993).

Credited with popularizing the concept of emotional intelligence and bringing its practical applications into the popular consciousness is author and researcher Daniel Goleman (Hein, 2005). Goleman's conceptualization of emotional intelligence expanded on the initial model of EI which was established by Mayer and Salovey five years before the 1995 publication of Goleman's bestselling text *Emotional Intelligence*. Goleman's expansion of the concept of Emotional Intelligence included suggestions that EI can be acquired or learned and that EI is a much stronger predictor of life successes than IQ (Pfeiffer, 2001). Despite his popularization of the notion of emotional intelligence, Goleman's conclusions have received much criticism by some academics who favor Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso's more scientific based determinations (Hein, 2001).

Work-related Applications of Emotional Intelligence

Goleman's work first allowed for the contemporary application of Emotional Intelligence as a predictor of job success (Smigla & Pastoria, 2000). Utilization of measures of emotional intelligence as predictors of employee quality is now commonplace in the world of business (Caruso, 1999). Indeed, measures of emotional intelligence such as the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory - EQ-I, Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and Emotional Intelligence Appraisal have been successfully employed by business-related organizations due to their

association with success in identifying “talented” individuals who are interpersonally skilled, change agile (TalentSmart, 2004, Human Dimension, 2005) and committed to their career (Brown, George-Curran & Smith, 2003; Cooper & Sawaf, 1996; Slaski & Cartwright, 2002; Wong & Law, 2002).

Many human resource practitioners and managers have recognized the value of skills related to emotional intelligence for over a decade now (Caruso, 2001). The proposal that emotional intelligence is a valid predictor of work performance is data driven and built upon concordant research findings (Cherniss, 2005; Lopes, 2004; Byrne, 2004; Tans, 2003; Haskett, 2003).

The U. S. Air Force used emotional intelligence testing to select recruiters who represent the Air Force’s most visible human resources personnel. The USAF found that the most successful recruiters scored significantly higher in several domains of emotional intelligence. The Air Force also found by employing measures of emotional intelligence to select recruiters that the ability to predict successful recruiters improved by nearly three-fold (Cherniss, 2004)

Experienced consulting firm partners who scored above the median score on a test of emotional intelligence showed \$1.2 million more in account profit than their lower-scoring peers. This earnings discrepancy represents a 139 % incremental gain for those individuals rated as possessing high levels of emotional intelligence (Boyatzis, 1999). Similar findings were produced from an examination of hiring methods at the L’Oreal Company. Sales agents who were selected based on emotional competencies significantly outsold salespeople selected using the company’s traditional selection process (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Spencer, McClelland, & Kelner, 1997).

A study conducted with a national insurance company using slightly different methodology replicated the findings of the L'Oreal study. The study of the insurance company made a comparison of the productivity of sales agents who were weak in emotional competencies such as self-confidence, initiative, and empathy, with those agents who garnished strong ratings in these areas of emotional intelligence. Average insurance policy premiums of \$54,000 were sold annually by sales agents with weak ratings, as compared to \$114,000 in annual sales by their higher rated peers (Hay/McBer Research and Innovation Group, 1997). These findings have been duplicated in studies which examine positions at virtually all levels in all manners of sales organizations (Pesuric & Byham, 1996; Bachman et al., 2000; Hay/McBer Research and Innovation Group, 1997; Porras & Anderson, 1981; Bachman, Stein, Campbell & Sitarenios, 2000). The aforementioned research determinations all point to the value of emotional intelligence measures as a predictor of job success in the business profession.

Research endeavors in the field of business not only suggest the value of emotional intelligence measures as predictors of job performance but also allude to the benefit of EI to predict occupational staying power (Spencer, McClelland, & Kelner, 1997) and ability to effectively cope with work-related stress (Lusch & Serpkeuci, 1990). Salespeople who were selected on the basis of emotional competence by the L'Oreal Company showed 63% less turnover during the first year than their peers who were selected using other criteria (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Spencer, McClelland, & Kelner, 1997). A large beverage firm reported 50% turnover rates among its division presidents. After adopting personnel selection criteria based on emotional intelligence competencies such as initiative, self-confidence, and leadership, turnover rates fell to six percent within

two years. (McClelland, 1999). A computer company that employed emotional competency-based hiring practices found that sales representatives who were selected using emotional competency criteria were 90% more likely to finish their training than those hired on other criteria (Hay/McBer Research and Innovation Group, 1997). An examination of hiring practices at a national furniture retailer found that sales people who were hired based on emotional competence experienced half the dropout rate during their first year when compared to colleagues whose hiring was based on other criteria (Hay/McBer Research and Innovation Group, 1997).

Despite the existence of such seemingly conclusive evidence pointing to the worth of EI as a predictor of occupational success and staying power in the business profession, research regarding the application of these same principles in other professions is seldom found. Only recently has the application of emotional intelligence concerns in human resources in the healthcare and education professions begun (Byrne, 2004). Research concerned with the critical teacher shortages that face many fields in the education profession are as of yet void of consideration of emotional intelligence and its role as a predictor of teacher's career longevity.

Demographic Predictors of Emotional Intelligence

Research aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of the concept of emotional intelligence and its application has sought to examine the relationship that exists between emotional intelligence and various demographic factors. Studies that have examined correlations between emotional intelligence and demographic factors have produced mixed results. The majority of demographic based emotional intelligence research inquiries have focused on gender differences in emotional intelligence.

Research conducted by Furnham and Petrides (2000) as well as Harrod and Scheer (2005) found no significant difference in the emotional intelligence ratings of male and female subjects. Likewise, Bar-On (2005) found no such gender performance discrepancies. Such findings are in contrast to those findings produced by Reiff, Hatzes, Bramel & Gibbon (2001) who did find significant differences in emotional intelligence ratings of male and female subjects. This discrepancy in findings suggests that further examination of the role of gender in emotional intelligence is warranted.

Although Bar-On (2005) reported no significant differences in the overall emotional intelligence ratings of males and females, discrepancies were noted for male versus female performance on some emotional intelligence related subscales of the EQ-i. More specifically, Bar-On found that the performance of females suggested that they possessed greater empathy, had more refined interpersonal skills, and registered as being more socially responsible than men. Bar-On's analysis of the performance of male respondents revealed that males tended to have higher self-regard, demonstrated greater self-reliance coped better with stress and were described as being more flexible problem solvers and more optimistic than women.

Although small in magnitude, significant differences were found in the emotional intelligence ratings of different age groups in Bar-On's 2005 study. Older subject groups outperformed younger subject groups on Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), with respondents in their late 40s registering the highest scores. Bar-On and Parker (2000) have also noted that increases in emotional-social intelligence seem to occur with age in children. A current longitudinal study following a group of subjects from birth through age 25 hopes to produce more in-depth examination of the development of

emotional intelligence across the life span. Interesting comparisons might then be made with existing knowledge of human cognitive development which is suggested to reach a plateau beginning in the second and third decades of life (Weschler, 1958).

No significant differences in emotional intelligence ratings were found between the performance of various ethnic groups on the EQ-I (Bar-On, 2005). Such conclusions are interesting when compared to the controversial findings that suggested the existence of significant differences in cognitive intelligence between various ethnic groups (Suzuki & Valencia, 1997).

Although examinations of gender, age and ethnicity have dominated the landscape of demographic-emotional intelligence research inquiries, other studies have produced interesting results. Yeh (1999) has conducted a unique research piece concerned with emotional intelligence in which he examines the role of emotional intelligence and parental education attainment. Yeh's findings suggested that higher parental education level was correlated positively with higher emotional intelligence ratings among respondents. An additional study concerned with emotional intelligence and academics revealed results that indicated that academic achievement among high school students was also found to be positively correlated with their emotional intelligence rating (Parker, Creque, Harris, Majeski, Wood, & Hogan, 2004).

While numerous comparisons have been made of emotional intelligence with various demographic factors, any proposed relationships have lacked supportive and conclusive research findings. Therefore, additional inquiry is needed to define any correlations that might exist between emotional intelligence ratings and subjects' personal demographic factors. In addition, the absence of consideration for the role of

emotional intelligence in the career decisions of special educators affirms the need for such a research endeavor. By examining both the role of emotional intelligence in the career decisions of special educators and the relationship that may exist between socio-demographic factors and emotional intelligence, valuable insight into the nature of emotional intelligence and career decisions of special educators may be achieved.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Despite two decades of research focused on the factors that influence teachers' career decisions special education continues to be an area of service that is experiencing critical teacher shortages. If marked improvement is to be gained for teacher retention in special education, new and insightful research into special educators' career decisions must be conducted. The present study through its examination of the influence of emotional intelligence factors on the career longevity of special educators endeavored to make such an innovative and insightful query.

Hypotheses/Research Questions

Based on research findings relative to emotional intelligence conducted in professions other than education, the researcher hypothesizes that veteran special education teachers will exhibit consistently high emotional intelligence ratings. Through the administration of a quantitative measure of emotional intelligence to 180 special educators in Middle Georgia, the researcher made comparisons of the emotional intelligence ratings for both veteran and non-veteran special education teachers. Respondents also completed a researcher-developed survey which was used to record socio-demographic information and school-related demographic information allowing for additional insightful comparisons to be made of veteran and non-veteran special educators.

Through the completion of this study, the researcher intended to answer the following overarching research question: *What is the role of emotional intelligence in the*

career decisions of special education teachers? Presently, no academic inquiries regarding the relationship of emotional intelligence to the career decisions of special educators have been made. By answering this question, valuable, unprecedented insight will be gained that will aide in understanding the dynamics of special educator's career decisions. A more refined understanding of special educator's career decisions might then be employed to combat current special educator shortages in the United States.

The first research sub-question to be investigated asks: *To what extent does emotional intelligence relate to the career longevity of special education teachers?* By answering this question any correlation between emotional intelligence and the career decisions of special educators may begin to be defined.

A second sub-question to be considered asks: *To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education teachers vary by socio-demographic factors?* Through the investigation of this question, the researcher aspired to develop a better awareness of any correlations that may exist between the socio-demographic factors and emotional intelligence ratings for special educators

The final sub-question to be answered through this research effort asked: *To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education teachers vary by school level factors?* By answering this question, the influence of school-level factors on special educators' emotional intelligence may be described. The understanding to be gained by answering these questions may provide as of yet unknown insight into the influences that impact the career decisions of special education teachers.

Research Design

In order to determine the influence of emotional intelligence on the career decisions of special educators, an approach of quantitative methods was employed in this study. Research relative to emotional intelligence and, more specifically, emotional intelligence as it relates to career success has been well established. Likewise, research relating to the career decisions of special educators has also been well refined. Since these phenomena have been so well researched and defined, a deductive, confirmatory and scientific quantitative research method was warranted. Established instrumentation was available for use as one component of this quantitative study while a complimentary researcher-created quantitative component was also employed as a second, related measure.

A purely qualitative methodology as well as a mixed-methods approach of inquiry were both considered before determining that a quantitative methodology would be employed in this study. Rather than employing inductive, qualitative methods of research to generate new theories, the researcher determined that deductive, quantitative research relative to the well-refined phenomenon of emotional intelligence and the career decisions of special educators was warranted.

When considering the various forms instrumentation that were available to the researcher, the most appropriate, obtainable instrument was one of quantitative design. The data produced by this instrument was purely quantitative in nature (interval data). In addition, the respondents to be used in this study were employed in the same county as the researcher; therefore, a mutual familiarity existed between the researcher and many of the respondents. The “detached” methods that are characteristic of quantitative research

(Johnson, 2005) were appealing to the researcher in hopes that such research methods would help to preserve objectivity and to reduce bias.

Finally, a quantitative methodology was chosen for use in this study because the researcher felt strongly that in order to increase the potential for the study to be generalized to other populations (external validity) a substantial population size was of paramount importance. The researcher had prerequisite knowledge that he would enjoy access to a large sample of special educators to serve as respondents in this study. Intending to capitalize on the availability of such a plentiful respondent pool, a quantitative study was selected because such methods would allow for the inclusion of the greatest number of respondents.

Population

Special education teachers working in Houston County, Georgia comprised the population of interest in this study. The special education teacher population examined in this study was identified by the Special Education Director for the Houston County School System.

Because the population of special educators who participated in this study was comprised of a diverse collection of educators, they were the most qualified population to answer the question: *What is the role of motional intelligence in the career decisions of special education teachers?* Both veteran and novice teachers took part in this study which allowed for insightful comparisons to be made based on the performance of these two classifications of teachers. In addition, the schools in which respondents were teaching were found to be diverse in their socioeconomic makeup. Such respondent diversity allowed for comparisons and generalizations to other populations to be made.

Participants

One hundred and eighty special education teachers were targeted for participation in this study. Of the special education teachers who were targeted for participation in this study 78 taught in elementary school, 58 taught in middle school and 32 taught in high school settings at the present time. An additional 12 teachers served in itinerant roles in which they served students at multiple schools.

The participants in this study were chosen because they were the best available representatives to answer the researcher's questions of interest. Of particular interest in this study were special educators who had thirteen or more years of credible teaching service. Respondents who reflected such criteria comprised the veteran special educator sub-population. Respondents who had less than thirteen years of credible teaching service constituted a second sub-population of interest- non-veteran special education teachers. The criteria of 13 years of credible teaching service reflected the average length of service for special education teachers in the southeastern United States as of 2002 (U.S. Department of Education- Office of Special Education Programs, 2002).

Participants in this study were identified with the assistance of the Houston County Georgia School System Special Education Director. The Houston County Special Education Director provided the researcher with a list of special educators who were practicing in the Houston County Georgia School District at the time of this study. While confidentiality was observed through the observation of respondent anonymity, this list of special education teachers was helpful to the researcher as it assisted in the determination of the respondent population size.

Instrumentation

In order to answer the research questions of interest, a two-part survey instrument consisting of parts A and B was employed in this study. Part A of the survey instrument consisted of a researcher-developed survey instrument. The researcher-developed instrument was intended to collect data from respondents relative to workplace and socio-demographics. The General Emotional Intelligence Scale constituted part B of the survey instrument and was administered with the intention that it collect data pertaining to the emotional intelligence ratings of respondents.

The General Emotional Intelligence Scale

The 45 item General Emotional Intelligence Scale (GEIS) tested for individual characteristics that have been associated with emotional intelligence. The GEIS produced an overall estimate of the emotional intelligence of each individual tested by assessing two constructs: emotional intelligence and emotional thinking (Mehrabian, 2001).

Albert Mehrabian, who developed the GEIS, defined emotional intelligence in terms of emotional empathy for others, attention to and discrimination of one's emotions, accurate recognition of one's own and others' moods, and mood management or control over emotions. The various traits that constitute emotional intelligence were identified by Mehrabian, in his GEIS manual, as correlates of life success. The first 37 items which account for approximately 80% of all items included in the GEIS, tested for the presence of these traits of emotional intelligence.

Mehrabian referred to emotional thinking as the impact of emotions on thinking and action, or “excessive influence of emotions on thought processes that can result in

selective, imbalanced, or distorted cognition of situations and relationships.” Mehrabian, in his examiner’s manual, related emotional thinking behavior to low emotional control or inadequate mood regulation, both of which were identified by Mehrabian as key emotional intelligence characteristics. Research by Mehrabian has demonstrated emotional thinking to have been an important negative predictor of life success. The GEIS’s final 8 items, which constitute approximately 20% of the total test, measured the emotional thinking of respondents.

The GEIS is appropriate for administration to English fluent respondents who are at least fifteen years of age and requires approximately ten minutes to complete. The instrument is appropriate for administration outside the presence of the researcher and employs a 9-point agreement-disagreement scale to gather responses. Accompanying the GEIS is related software that aides in administering, scoring, and interpreting the General Emotional Intelligence Scale. If pencil and paper administration of the GEIS is preferred, the software can be used to input data from each participant for the purpose of computing total scores and z-scores. The GEIS software allows for total (raw) scores, equivalent z-scores, and equivalent percentile scores to be calculated and interpreted.

A database of scores for all individuals tested, as well as an exportable and printable data file, are additional features of the GEIS software. In addition, the software for the GEIS also includes a feature that will assist in detecting response slanting. This “lie” feature will notify the researcher when such responses reach an unacceptable level.

Scoring. Total scores (raw scores) were computed by adding a respondent’s responses to all 22 of the positively worded items and by subtracting from this sum the sum of his/her responses to all 23 of the negatively worded items (Mehrabian, 2001).

Mehrabian, the developer of the General Emotional Intelligence Scale, refers to the instrument's ability to reduce acquiescence bias (the tendency for some respondents to either agree or disagree with most or all statements presented to them). Nearly one-half (22) of the items found on the GEIS are worded so that agreement indicates higher emotional intelligence. The remaining 23 items are worded so that negative responses signify higher emotional intelligence. The wording of such items is intended to deter the manifestation of acquiescence bias among respondents.

Validity Data. Persons with higher General Emotional Intelligence Scale (GEIS) ratings when compared with individuals with lower ratings, were found to demonstrate the following qualities: higher achievement and success orientation; higher self-actualization (i.e., capacity to develop to one's full potential); higher self-esteem; higher optimism; lower trait anxiety; lower depression; lower emotional thinking (i.e., selective and distorted thought processes due to excessive emotionality); higher disciplined goal orientation; higher affiliation, sociability, and friendliness; higher social competence; higher adaptive coping (i.e., deal adaptively with everyday life stressors); higher integrity and honesty, and higher IQ (general intelligence); all of these traits have been shown to be correlates of life and career success (Mehrabian, 2000).

Norming Data. The researcher made several comparisons using the data that is obtained through the administration of the GEIS. For correlations of GEIS scores with other variables such as the demographic characteristics of respondents, Mehrabian suggests that the use of norms is unnecessary. Mehrabian suggests instead that respondents raw scores obtained from the GEIS be used when making such comparisons.

In addition to comparing the GEIS scores for respondents with various demographic characteristics, it was the intention of the researcher to draw comparisons of individual GEIS scores with GEIS scores for the entire research population. In order for such analysis to be made, norms were necessary (Mehrabian, 2001).

The following norms are provided by Mehrabian for the General Emotional Scale. A mean of 45 and standard deviation of 42 are reported for the GEIS. Mehrabian provides the following formula for z score calculations ($z \text{ score} = \text{total raw score} / 45 - 42$). Once z scores are obtained, statistical tables may then be referenced to determine percentile scores which provide for additional comparisons to be made.

Internal Consistency. The two components of the GEIS (emotional intelligence and emotional thinking) report the following alpha ratings for internal consistency: emotional intelligence = .85; emotional thinking = .79. Mehrabian reports that due to the variety of positively intercorrelated characteristics that are necessary to measure general emotional intelligence, the self-described moderate internal consistency coefficient of .85 reflects such required diversity among test items yet still reflects acceptable test item homogeneity.

Test-Retest Reliability. In order to establish test-retest reliability, Mehrabian administered the GEIS to the same sample of 47 participants 4 weeks apart. A satisfactory correlation of .72 was reported between the first and second administrations.

Researcher-created Survey Instrument

Through the administration of the highly reliable and validated General Emotional Intelligence Scale, the researcher intended to establish an understanding of the emotional intelligence capacities of special educators in Houston County, Georgia. In

order to gather a more thorough understanding of selected work–related experiences and socio-demographic characteristics of special education teachers in Houston County, Georgia, a researcher-developed survey instrument was also administered to the respondents to this study. By gathering such data pertaining to work-related experiences and socio-demographics and by making comparisons with emotional intelligence ratings, a more refined understanding of the emotional intelligence capacities of special educators in Middle Georgia was established.

The items that comprise the researcher-created survey instrument are intended to measure factors that have been demonstrated through research-based inquiry to impact the career decisions of special educators (see Appendix B). The researcher-developed survey instrument that was used in this study is comprised of 10 response items. The response items contained on the researcher-created survey instrument are formatted such that they require either multiple choice or short answer responses.

The first three items of the researcher-created survey instrument seek personal socio-demographic information from respondents. Specifically, these three items seek to record the age, sex and racial/ethnic identity of respondents. Items four through eight on the researcher-developed survey are focused on determining respondents' professional qualifications and experience. Questions pertaining to degree attainment, salary, route of certification, years of teaching experience and current school assignment constitute questions four through eight. The researcher-created survey instrument's remaining two items relate to school-level demographic factors. These items seek to determine the overall socio-economic status of the families of student populations served in respondents' schools as well as the location of the school as designated by urban or rural

status. These final two items were not indicated on respondents' surveys. Instead these items were contained on a piece of paper separate from respondents' survey instruments. Following the collection of respondents' survey instruments, the researcher answered these final two school-level demographic questions based on information provided by respondents.

Pilot Testing

Due to its status as a researcher-created instrument, pilot testing was necessary in order to establish the appropriateness of the instrument for administration. Conventional pilot testing procedures (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001) were conducted among a population of eight special education teachers (4 veteran and 4 non-veteran) from within the research population of interest. Pilot study participants were excluded from participation in the final administration of the survey. The pilot study consisted of an administration of the survey instrument to pilot subjects which was intended to replicate the survey administration that occurred in the final administration. Respondents' completion times were recorded in the pilot study in order to establish expected testing duration. Pilot study respondents were provided with feedback forms which allowed them to identify problems or ambiguities found among the instrument's items. Based on the pilot study's respondent feedback, re-wording or re-scaling changes were initiated. A second re-piloting of the survey instrument was found to be unnecessary.

Data Collection

Survey instruments were distributed and collected through the Houston County inter-system mail delivery service. Once the number of special educators located at each

school in the system was determined, envelopes were prepared for distribution to the principal of each school. Each envelope contained surveys corresponding to the number of special educators at each school. In addition, each envelope contained a researcher-addressed envelope as well as a letter addressed to each principal which offered information pertaining to the administration of the survey as well as thanks for participating in the study. Following the collection of the surveys, the researcher answered the final two researcher-developed survey items using internet-based resources. Once the final two researcher-answered items were completed on each respondent's survey, data analysis began.

Data Analysis

T-tests of independent means were employed to analyze the data relative to the emotional intelligence ratings of respondents that was collected through this study. The t-test revealed any significant differences that existed in the mean emotional intelligence ratings for respondents when grouped by veteran and non-veteran status as well as for grouping based on the various socio-demographic and school-level factors of interest in this study. The t-test of independent means was the most appropriate statistical instrument to use in this instance because the mean emotional intelligence scores of two independent groups (veteran and non-veteran special educators) (Hinkle, Wiersma & Jurs, 1994) were collected. In order to determine the mean emotional intelligence rating for veteran and non-veteran special educators, the computation of raw scores for each respondent was accomplished by hand. A web-based statistical calculator was used to perform all statistical analyses.

Reporting the Data

Once data collection and analyses occurred, data was presented to answer each of the three research questions. This first research question- *To what extent does emotional intelligence relate to the career longevity of special education teachers?*, was addressed through the administration of the GEIS instrument. Mean emotional intelligence ratings for both the group of veteran special educators and the group of non-veteran special educators were presented in both graphic and tabular format to aid in answering the aforementioned research question.

The final two research questions- *To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education teachers vary by socio-demographic factors?* and *To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education teachers vary by school level factors?*, were addressed through the administration of the researcher-created survey instrument and were answered using both graphic and tabular means. Both tabular and graphic reporting were used in this instance because the use of graphic reporting alone for the results of each of the ten items found on the researcher-created survey instrument would produce a cumbersome, difficult to read report. Supplementing such graphic publication of findings with a tabular report of findings served to make the navigation of the study's results less complicated.

Summary

Through the completion of this study, the researcher intended to examine the role of emotional intelligence in the career decisions of special educators. In order to examine the influence of emotional intelligence on the career decisions of special educators, the researcher administered a two-part instrument together to 180 special education teachers

who were teaching in the Houston County School System, a suburban/rural school district in Middle Georgia. The survey instrument was comprised of a researcher-developed demographic survey component as well as the General Emotional Intelligence Scale. The researcher-created survey portion of the instrument gathered from respondents socio-demographic and school level demographic data. The General Emotional intelligence Scale was employed to provide an emotional intelligence measure for each respondent. Data obtained from the administration of this instrument was used to make comparisons that aided in answering the following research questions: *To what extent does emotional intelligence relate to the career longevity of special education teachers?; To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education teachers vary by socio-demographic factors?; To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education teachers vary by school level factors?*

CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

When considering the chronic shortage of special education teachers that has and continues to plague the education system of the United States, an improved understanding of the factors that influence the career decisions of special educators is needed. Through conducting the present study, the researcher sought to examine several ability-based and demographic variables in relation to the career decisions of special educators. Of particular interest were the influences of emotional intelligence on the career longevity of special educators and the correlation of various socio-demographic and school level factors with mean emotional intelligence ratings of special educators. In order to determine the role of emotional intelligence in the career decisions of special educators, this study's one hundred and twenty nine respondents completed a two part survey consisting of the General Emotional Intelligence Scale (GEIS) and a researcher-developed questionnaire. The GEIS was administered to respondents with the intention that it provide a measure of emotional intelligence for respondents. The researcher-created portion of the survey was used to collect socio-demographic and school level data from respondents. In order to aide with comparisons, respondents were grouped by veteran and non-veteran status to determine if any significant differences in mean emotional intelligence existed for these two groups.

Research Questions

Through the completion of this study, the researcher intended to provide an answer to the following overarching question : *What is the role of emotional intelligence*

in the career decisions of special education teachers? In order to answer the overarching research question, the following sub-questions were posed and answered: *To what extent does emotional intelligence relate to the career longevity of special education teachers? To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education teachers vary by school level factors? To what extent does the mean emotional intelligence of special education teachers vary by socio-demographic factors?*

Research Design

In order to answer the overarching question and related sub-questions a study of quantitative design was employed by the researcher. A two-part survey instrument was compiled which consists of the GEIS and a researcher-developed questionnaire. The GEIS is a 45-item lykert-type questionnaire that provides a rating of respondents' emotional intelligence. The researcher-developed questionnaire consists of eight-items which were intended to gather personal socio-demographic and work-related demographic data. Based on school-identifier information found on the researcher-developed questionnaire, the researcher located information pertaining to two additional work-related demographic variables for each respondent's school or schools of employment.

Before research was initiated, approval was gained from the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board as well as from officials from the Houston County Board of Education. Prior to undertaking research, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the appropriateness of the survey instrument's content and format and to establish the most efficient means of administration. A total of eight respondents were chosen at

random from a list of special education teachers in the Houston County, Georgia School System for participation in pilot study testing.

Pilot study surveys were sent to respondents in the same manner that final research surveys were distributed. Six of the eight pilot study surveys were returned completed. Pilot study participants were given the same instructions for survey instrument completion that were eventually received by final study participants with the exception that pilot study respondents were asked to provide written feedback on their completed forms regarding the design, content, administration and completion time of the survey. Despite varying degrees of input being provided by pilot study respondents, valuable information was gained which helped to ensure that the final survey product was appropriately formatted and administered.

According to pilot study respondents, the suggested ten minute completion time for the survey was found to be adequate. In addition, pilot study participants provided two suggestions which improved the structure and administration of the survey instrument. First, item 1 of the researcher-developed portion of the survey instrument was found to be an area of concern that was identified by two respondents. The scale used to offer answers for item 1 was found to contain redundancies. The original scale offered ages “Under 25; 25-35; 35-45; 45-55; Over 55”. In this original scale, the ages 35 and 45 were found in two separate ranges. As suggested by pilot study respondents, the following adjusted scale was added to item 1 to offer more accurate and appropriate age range selections, “Under 25; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55 or Over”.

Item seven of the researcher-developed survey proved to be another area of concern to pilot study respondents, garnishing suggestions from three respondents. Item

seven prompts respondents to indicate at which school he or she teaches. Initially, one selection blank was offered in which respondents could indicate the name of their school. Pilot study respondents suggested that multiple blanks be provided in order to accommodate the experiences of all special educators. Due to the nature of their job duties, many special educators work in multiple schools during the course of a school year, week, or even day. The suggestion to add multiple response blanks so as to accommodate special educators who serve in multiple schools settings was a valid suggestion which resulted in the addition of three additional response blanks for item seven.

Respondents

This study's 129 respondents were all special educators in the Houston County, Georgia School System. A total of 180 special education teachers were targeted for participation in this study and were sent surveys to complete. The 129 of the 180 completed survey instruments that were returned constituted a 71.6 % percent response rate. While no agreed upon universally acceptable minimum response rate exists (Johnson, 2005), the population of respondents to this study do share similar geographic and occupational characteristics. Such population similarities, coupled with relatively healthy sample size used in this study make the 71.6% response rate suitable for making conclusions and generalizations from this study's findings (Dillman, 1999).

The respondent population for this study was found to be overwhelmingly Caucasian. Caucasians constituted 94 of the 129 respondents. African American teachers were second most populous with twenty eight respondents indicating such racial

identity. Two respondents reported their race to be of Hispanic origin. One respondent identified herself as Multiracial. One respondent did not indicate her race.

The sample surveyed in this study was overwhelmingly female in its membership. Females outnumbered males 113 to 16. Male membership among the veteran and nonveteran respondent groups was found to be 3 and 13, respectively. In comparison, 42 veteran female special educators and 71 nonveteran female special educators were included in the respondent groups. The high female to male ratios found in this study reflected the same sex-based discrepancies that have been seen on a national-scale and that have been evident for the past four decades (Morvant, et al. 1999, National Center for Education Statistics, 2006).

The age distribution among respondents reflected a younger population with 45 respondents' reporting their age to be between 25 and 34 years. Forty respondents offered that their age fell between 35 and 44 years. Thirty six respondents selected that 45 to 54 range to report their age and 6 respondents affiliated themselves with the "over 55" age group.

Overall and as might be expected, veteran respondents held higher academic degrees than their nonveteran colleagues. Reporting of advanced degrees was common among nonveteran respondents but not with the frequency found among veterans. The distribution of degrees among the entire respondent population was consistent with distributions reported nationally (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). Slightly higher than the national average educational attainment was found among this study's respondents with 74 of 129 respondents reporting holding an advanced degree such as a master's, education specialist's, or doctor's degree.

The experience level of respondents was found to vary greatly with the range of reported years of credible service ranging from one year to thirty four years. The thirteen years of experience-threshold was of particular importance and interest in this study. According to the most contemporary statistics available, the average length of service for special educators in the southeastern United States was found to be thirteen years (U.S. Department of Education- Office of Special Education Programs, 2002). This criteria for experience was employed by the researcher to discriminate between veteran and non-veteran special educators. Having twelve or fewer years of experience qualified respondents as non-veteran special educators while thirteen or more years of experience qualified a respondent as having veteran status for the purposes of this research.

This study's non-veteran respondents outnumbered veteran respondents 59 to 32. The average length of service for non-veteran special educators was 5.75 years while veteran teachers averaged 22 years of experience. The distribution of reported salaries for respondents showed a fairly even distribution across the range of earnings. The thirty to forty thousand dollar range was found to be the most populous range of earnings with thirty five respondents reporting annual salaries within this range. The forty to fifty and fifty to sixty thousand dollar salary ranges showed comparable membership with twenty five and twenty four respondents, respectively. The highest range of earnings, more than sixty thousand dollars earned annually, held seven respondents while the lowest earnings range, less than thirty thousand dollars earned annually, was not selected by any of the 129 respondents.

The overwhelming majority of respondents in this study indicated that they had pursued their initial teacher certification through traditional four-year college preparatory

programs. Seventy nine respondents indicated experience in such preparatory programs while the remaining thirteen respondents reported indoctrination into the teaching profession through an alternative certification program such as Georgia's Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP).

Findings

The overarching question, *What is the role of emotional intelligence in the career decisions of special education teachers?*, provides the primary focus for this research.

The findings of this research indicate that the role of emotional intelligence in the career decisions of special educators is defined by a positive correlation between experience and emotional intelligence. This is evidenced by the tendency of veteran special educator respondents to register statistically significantly higher ratings of emotional intelligence than nonveteran respondents. In order to address the overarching research question, the researcher first sought to answer the related sub-question: *To what extent does emotional intelligence relate to the career longevity of special education teachers?* Once related data was collected, an independent samples t-test was employed to aide in data analysis. Analysis revealed the significant difference ($t(124) = 3.29, p < .05$) in the mean emotional intelligence ratings of veteran ($M = 77.8, SD = 27.8$) and nonveteran ($M = 60.5, SD = 28.7$) respondent groups that is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean Emotional Intelligence Ratings of Veterans and Nonveterans

<i>Emotional Intelligence Rating</i>	N	M	SD	t
Veterans	45	77.8	27.8	3.29*
Nonveterans	82	60.5	28.7	

* $p < .05$

In order to answer the research sub-questions: *To what extent do the emotional intelligence ratings of special education teachers vary by socio-demographic factors?* and *To what extent do the emotional intelligence ratings of special education teachers vary by school level factors?*, demographic data was gathered from special educators in this study. Data analysis using independent samples t-tests revealed a mixture of significant and nonsignificant differences.

Due to the underrepresentation of several races among the respondent group, a comparison of the mean emotional intelligence ratings of the two predominantly represented races among respondents, African American/Non-Hispanics (M = 72.2, SD = 33.9) and White/Non-Hispanics (M = 65.1, SD = 28.2) was conducted. Analysis revealed the significant difference ($t(121) = 1.11, p < .05$) shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Mean Emotional Intelligence Ratings for African Americans and Caucasians

Race	N	Mean	SD	t
African American/ Non-Hispanic	28	72.2	33.9	1.11*
White/Non-Hispanic	93	65.1	28.2	

* $p < .05$

A comparison of the mean emotional intelligence rating for respondents 45 years old or younger ($M = 62.5$, $SD = 29.5$) with the mean emotional intelligence rating of respondents over 45 years old ($M = 75.2$, $SD = 27.9$) revealed the significant difference ($t(126) = 2.34$, $p = .05$) shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean Emotional Intelligence Rating by Age

Age Ranges	N	Mean	SD	t
45 and Under	83	62.5	29.5	2.34*
Over 45	43	75.2	27.9	

* $p < .05$

A comparison of the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents earning salaries below \$50,000 ($M = 59.4$, $SD = 28.1$) with the mean emotional intelligence rating of respondents earning salaries in excess of \$50,000 ($M = 81.1$, $SD = 26.9$) revealed the substantially significant difference ($t(126) = -4.17$, $p < .05$) shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Mean Emotional Intelligence by Annual Salary Earned

Level of Degree	N	Mean	SD	t
\$50,000 or less	83	59.4	28.1	-4.17*
More than \$50,000	43	81.1	26.9	

* $p < .05$

A comparison of the mean emotional intelligence rating of respondents holding a bachelor's degree as their most advanced degree ($M = 56.8$, $SD = 29.7$) with the mean emotional intelligence rating of respondents holding a minimum of a master's degree ($M = 73.9$, $SD = 27.4$) revealed the substantially significant difference ($t(124) = -3.33$, $p < .05$) shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Mean Emotional Intelligence by Level of Degree Held

Level of Degree	N	Mean	SD	t
Bachelor's	52	56.8	29.7	-3.33*
Master's or higher	74	73.9	27.4	

* $p < .05$

A comparison of the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents who were prepared for teaching through alternative certification programs ($M = 47$, $SD = 26$) with the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents who were prepared for teaching through traditional certification programs ($M = 70.1$, $SD = 28.8$) revealed the significant difference ($t(124) = -3.19$, $p < .05$) shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Mean Emotional Intelligence Ratings by Certification Program

Preparation Program	N	Mean	SD	t
Alternative	18	47	26	-3.19*
Traditional	108	70.1	28.8	

* $p < .05$

A comparison of the mean emotional intelligence rating of special educators serving in schools with low SES student populations ($M = 65.5$, $SD = 30.5$) with the mean emotional intelligence rating of special educators serving in schools with high SES student populations ($M = 73.1$, $SD = 23.1$) revealed no significant differences ($t(124) = -1.08$, $p > .05$). The results of this comparison are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Mean Emotional Intelligence Ratings for Teachers by School SES

% of Population Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch	N	Mean	SD	t
49% or less	105	65.5	30.5	-1.08*
50 % or more	21	73.1	23.1	

* $p < .05$

A comparison of the mean emotional intelligence ratings for female ($M = 67.7$, $SD = 30.4$) and males ($M = 60.2$, $SD = 21.2$) respondent groups revealed no statistically significant difference. This non-significant difference ($t(124) = 0.925$, $p > .05$) is demonstrated in Table 8.

Table 8

Mean Emotional Intelligence Ratings by Sex

Sex	N	Mean	SD	t
Female	111	67.7	30.4	0.925
Male	15	60.2	21.2	

$p > .05$

A comparison of the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents who work in schools located in rural areas ($M = 69.3$, $SD = 26.2$) with the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents who work in schools in urban areas ($M = 66.1$, $SD = 30.4$) revealed no significant differences ($t(124) = 0.503$, $p > .05$). The results of this comparison are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Mean Emotional Intelligence Ratings by School Location

Location	N	Mean	SD	t
Rural	28	69.3	26.2	0.503
Urban	98	66.1	30.4	

$p > .05$

Summary

The statistical analyses performed at the conclusion of data gathering produced results of mixed significance. Of particular interest in this study was the comparison of the emotional intelligence ratings of veteran and nonveteran special educators. A t-test of independent means which was employed to aide in the comparison of groups of veterans' and nonveterans' mean emotional intelligence ratings revealed that the veteran population of special educators had a significantly higher mean emotional intelligence rating than their nonveteran colleagues. Also of interest in this study were comparisons of the mean emotional intelligence of respondents relative to several socio-demographic variables and work-related factors. The t-tests which were employed to aide in data analysis of these variables revealed results of mixed significance. Statistically significant differences were found in the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents when grouped according to experience, race, age, annual salary, level of degree held, type of teacher preparation program completed and socioeconomic status. No statistically significant differences were found in the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents when grouped by sex or urban/rural school location.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

This study finds its focus on the career decisions of special education teachers. More precisely, the present study sought to examine several ability-based and demographic variables in relation to the career decisions of special educators. In order to collect data to aide in making these comparisons, 180 special educators in the Houston County, Georgia school system were administered the General Emotional Intelligence Scale as well as a researcher-created demographic questionnaire.

Analysis of Research Findings

Overall, this study's findings indicate that a positive correlation exists between the experience level of special educators and their emotional intelligence. A comparison of the emotional intelligence ratings of veteran and nonveteran teacher respondent groups showed highly statistically significant differences. On average, the respondent group comprised of veterans yielded significantly higher ratings of emotional intelligence than the respondent group comprised of nonveterans. Varying significance levels were found when making comparisons of the mean emotional intelligence of special educators when grouped by demographic variables. Statistically significant differences in mean emotional intelligence for special education teachers were found when respondents were grouped for comparison by career longevity, race, age, annual salary, level of degree, type of teacher preparation program completed and socioeconomic status of the student population served. The mean emotional intelligence of respondents showed no

statistically significant difference when comparisons were made based on sex and school location (urban or rural setting).

Discussion of Research Findings

The present study has produced findings which indicate that a positive correlation exists between the experience level and emotional intelligence of special educators. Such findings lend support to the notion of Daniel Goleman and others that emotional intelligence is cultivated over time and through life experiences. The present study also supplements the existing body of knowledge pertaining to the worth of socio-demographic variables and school level factors as predictors of emotional intelligence with some findings that are in conflict with previous research efforts and other findings that are in concert with the results of similar inquiries. Mixed support for the worth of demographic variables as predictors of emotional intelligence has been published in past studies (Furnham & Petrides, 2000; Reiff, Hatzes, Bramel & Gibbon, 2001; Bar-On, 2005).

Billingsley (2004) has completed the most comprehensive meta-analysis of research pertaining to the career decisions of special education teachers. Through her presentation of a tri-categorical organization and representation of these factors (External, Personal and Work-Related), Billingsley chronicles all inquiries that are pertinent to special educators' career decisions, that existed prior to 2004. The present study has supplemented the work of Billingsley through its investigation of emotional intelligence, a factor that has prior to this study, never been considered relative to its influence on the career decisions of special educators. In the context of her proposed framework, this study and the impact of emotional intelligence on the career decisions of special

educators that is described herein would be best assimilated into the *Personal* factors category of Billingsley's model. Such classification would be most appropriate because similar to IQ, emotional intelligence is described in terms of status as an individual ability (Mayer & Salovey, 1990; Goleman, 1995; Mehrabian, 2001; Bar-On, 2005).

Experience. In examining the mean emotional intelligence ratings for veteran and nonveteran special educators, statistical analysis using a t-test of independent means revealed a highly statistically significant difference. The mean emotional intelligence rating for veteran special educators as measured by the General Emotional intelligence Scale was found to be 77.64. The mean emotional intelligence rating for nonveteran special educator respondents to this study was found to be significantly lower, at 60.41. The results of this study do indeed point to the worth of emotional intelligence as a correlate of career success, as veteran respondents are defined through this study and its results as individuals who have demonstrated both occupational staying power and high emotional intelligence.

The significantly higher emotional intelligence rating for more experienced respondents in this study reflect the findings of Spencer & Spencer(1993), Spencer, McClelland, & Kelner (1997), Hay/McBer Research and Innovation Group (1997) and McClelland (1999) all of whom have pointed to the worth of emotional intelligence as a valid predictor of occupational staying power. While not directly addressing occupational staying power as a specific benefit of high emotional intelligence, Daniel Goleman (1995) and other researchers have also suggested the merit that is to be found in high emotional intelligence's correlation to career success.

Race. Statistical analysis of the findings of this study revealed a significant discrepancy in the emotional intelligence ratings of the two predominant racial groups represented among respondents. Such findings are in agreement with the conclusions of .Suzuki & Valencia(1997), but are in conflict with the findings of Bar-On (2005) who found no significant difference sin the emotional intelligence ratings of various ethnic groups. The present study revealed a mean emotional intelligence rating for African American respondents ($M = 72.2$) which was found to be significantly higher than the mean emotional intelligence rating of Caucasian respondents ($M = 65.1$). It should be noted that although African American respondents constituted the largest group of respondents from a racial minority, they are significantly underrepresented among the overall heavily Caucasian respondent population.

Age. Comparison of the mean emotional intelligence ratings of younger and older respondents showed a statistically significant difference, which is agreement with the findings of Bar-On and Parker (2000) and Bar-On (2005). Such a finding is in conflict with the recent findings of Harrod and Scheer (2005) who found no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and age in their examination of emotional intelligence and various demographic factors. In the present study the respondents belonging to the group comprised of older teachers (over 46 years of age) were found to have an average emotional intelligence rating that was significantly higher ($M = 75.2$) than the same rating taken from their younger peers(45 years or younger) ($M = 62.5$).

Salary. Statistical analysis of the data relating to the salaries and emotional intelligence of respondents revealed significant differences for higher and lower earning groups. Little prior research has been conducted relative to emotional intelligence and

salary or earning potential. A meta-analysis of emotional intelligence-related research conducted by Cherniss (2005) provides numerous examples of research in business fields which correlate high emotional intelligence with increased earnings capacity among salespersons and support the notion that greater emotional intelligence can promote higher earnings.

Degree Level. When making comparisons of the mean emotional intelligence ratings for respondents grouped by degree level a statistically significant difference was found. The group comprised of respondents who held a minimum of a master's level degree were found to have a significantly higher mean emotional intelligence rating ($M = 56.8$) than their respondent peers who possessed only a bachelor's level degree ($M = 73.9$). Currently no studies concerned with emotional intelligence and its correlation with degree attainment have been published. Closely related however are findings by Harrod and Scheer (2005) which describe a positive correlation between emotional intelligence in adolescents and parent's level of education. This same phenomenon is chronicled by Bar-On in his 2005 research.

Teacher Preparation Program. Comparison of the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents grouped by type of teacher preparation program having completed revealed significant differences. When grouped according to teacher preparation program, the group of respondents having received teacher preparatory training through traditional certification programs were found to have a significantly higher mean emotional intelligence rating ($M = 70.1$) than their alternative certification program prepared peers ($M = 47$). No related prior research exists with which to draw comparisons.

Sex. A comparison of the mean emotional intelligence ratings of male and female respondents showed no significant differences. These findings are in agreement with those of previous studies conducted by Furnham and Petrides (2000) and Bar-On (2005) who found no significant differences in the career longevity of male and female special educators. While the majority of studies concerned with correlations between emotional intelligence and sex have failed to produce significant results, studies conducted by Reiff, Hatzes, Bramel and Gibbon (2001) and Harrod and Scheer (2005) represent exceptions. Both Reiff, Hatzes, Bramel et al. and Harrod and Scheer found female respondents to have significantly higher emotional intelligence ratings than their male respondent counterparts.

School Socioeconomic Level. When comparing the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents grouped according to the socio-economic status (SES) of the student population which they serve, statistically significant differences were found. The respondents group comprised of teachers working in schools with less than 49 % of students receiving free and reduced lunch assistance (high SES schools) produced significantly higher mean emotional intelligence ratings ($M = 73.1$) than their peers who worked in schools with 50% or more of students receiving free or reduced lunch (low SES schools) ($M = 65.5$). Prior to the present study, no research exists which examines this very specific demographic factor relative to the emotional intelligence of special education teachers.

Rural/Urban Designation of School. This study's final demographic comparison was concerned with drawing a comparison between the mean emotional intelligence of two final respondent groupings- respondents who work in schools located in rural settings

with respondents who work in urban settings. No statistically significant differences were found in the mean emotional intelligence ratings for respondents working in schools situated in rural areas and respondents working in schools situated in urban areas.

Conclusions

Experience. The present study produced findings which indicate that the average emotional intelligence ratings found among the veteran special educator respondent group were significantly higher than those found among the nonveteran group. As suggested by Goelman (1995), emotional intelligence development can be heightened over time and through life and workplace experiences. It is likely then, that the higher mean emotional intelligence rating of veteran respondents is the product of a lengthy, veteran career during which educators are challenged to manage many different interpersonal relationships and formidable work and social situations. If credence is given to Daniel Goleman's claim that emotional intelligence is a learned skill, this assertion may hold the most potential as a viable explanation for this study's findings that veteran respondents registered higher mean emotional intelligence ratings than nonveteran respondents.

Race. Differences in the mean emotional intelligence ratings for respondents when grouped by race were found to be statistically significant. African American respondents as a group were found to have a higher mean emotional intelligence rating than their Caucasian respondent population peers. The significant differences in the mean emotional intelligence ratings of these two groups may be best considered as a result of a marked demonstration of resilience among African American respondents. While surely not describing the experiences of all African American respondents to this

study, the unique barriers and challenges that are faced by individuals who belong to racial minority subgroups have been well documented as presenting considerable obstacles to achieving success in both work and life (Allen, 1992; Elmes & Connelly, 1997; Kao, Tienda, 1998;). Perhaps through their life experiences, by successfully learning to navigate the formidable challenges that they have likely encountered throughout their lives, many of the African American respondents to this study have developed a high level of emotional intelligence, once again drawing on Goleman's claim that emotional intelligence is developed over time and through experiences. Demonstrating such resilience through the successful accomplishment of all that is required to gain entry in the field of education as a professional despite the potential and unique challenges that they are likely to have faced may indeed provide a viable explanation for the higher the African American group possessing a significantly higher mean emotional intelligence rating than their Caucasian peers.

Age. The results of this study indicate that the development of emotional intelligence for the respondents in this study may parallel their aging. Teacher attrition, which is a primary underlying concern of this study, has been shown to be significantly higher among younger (nonveteran) special educators than older (veteran) special educators (Marshall and Marshall, 2003). Such conditions lend support to the idea that younger, assumed less emotionally intelligent special educators tend to burn out due to a deficiency in the beneficial, career longevity-promoting characteristics that are associated with having high emotional intelligence. As with the significant discrepancy that was found in the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents when grouped by experience level, the discrepancy in emotional intelligence ratings between older and

younger respondent groups in this study also offers evidentiary support to Daniel Goleman's (1995) suggestion that emotional intelligence can be developed over time and through experience. Older teachers through their myriad of life experiences might have developed more refined emotional intelligence as a byproduct of this experience through trial and error or necessity.

Salary. The significant difference found in the mean emotional intelligence of respondent groups defined by earnings may most appropriately be considered as a product of teacher's veteran or nonveteran status. The higher earning group with higher mean emotional intelligence is comprised predominantly of veteran teachers. The lower earning group is predominantly nonveteran in membership. Assuming that the aforementioned proposed correlation between life experiences and emotional intelligence development is accurate, the significantly higher earning group registers a mean emotional intelligence rating that is significantly higher due to advanced age and experience. The salaries of the special educator respondents in this group is a reflection of veteran teachers' ascension within the graduated pay scale on which annual salaries are based. As teachers earn more years of experience and/or earn advanced degrees, their salary and pay-scale step increases. By qualifying with the thirteen years or more of credible teaching service that define veteran special educators for this study, veteran respondents' pay-scaled salaries are inherently higher than nonveteran respondents who by definition have fewer years of experience and on this basis qualify for a lower pay-scale step.

A remaining equalizing factor in the comparison of veteran and nonveteran special educators' salaries is their level of degree held (Haberman, 2005). Based on the

Georgia state salary scale and Houston County Board of Education local salary supplement scale, the acquisition of advanced academic degrees such as master's, specialist's, and doctor's degrees provides another avenue through which educators may show advancement through pay-scale steps. Based on such a pay system, the potential exists for nonveteran special educators who hold advanced degrees and have experience levels that are comparable to those of less educated veteran colleagues to earn higher annual salaries. Such higher-earning nonveteran respondents were represented in this study's results; however, they were underrepresented and did not significantly impact the more common occurrence of higher earning veteran teachers.

Degree Level The significant difference in mean emotional intelligence ratings between respondent groups defined by degree acquisition may once again be associated directly with veteran and nonveteran membership within these groups. Typically and as is the case in this study, veteran teachers, through their years of opportunity, hold higher level degrees and have the opportunity to cultivate more refined emotional intelligence than their nonveteran peers. As a result of this principle, the respondent group defined by its more advanced degree acquisition and higher mean emotional intelligence is comprised primarily of veterans while the group defined by the acquisition of less advanced degrees and lower mean emotional intelligence is comprised primarily of nonveteran teachers.

The discrepancies in the level of degree held among veteran and nonveteran respondent groups is no doubt a function of the improved opportunities afforded to veterans to further their education over the course of lengthier careers. In the same vein, nonveteran respondents, no matter how ambitious, simply may not have had enough time

and opportunity in their fledgling careers to earn the more advanced degrees held by their veteran colleagues. It should be noted that the number of nonveteran respondents who reported holding terminal degrees surprisingly outnumbered veterans 2 to 1. The attainment of such advanced degrees by individuals with less than thirteen years of experience is indicative of either exceptional ambitiousness on the part of these individuals or of entrance into the field of education later in life through a non-traditional teacher preparation program.

Teacher Preparation Program. The significant difference found in the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents when grouped according to the type of teacher preparation program completed is most likely a function of respondents' experience level. The respondent group defined by the completion of a traditional teacher preparation program was found to have a mean emotional intelligence rating that was significantly higher than the group comprised of respondents who had completed an alternative teacher preparation program. A comparison of respondents' type of preparation program completed and experience level reveals that members of the traditional teacher preparation group had an average length of service of 12.4 years and average age within the 46 to 55 years range. In comparison, an examination of respondents prepared through alternative certification programs' experience levels reveals an average length of service of 4.06 years and average age in the 36 to 45 years range. The suggested positive correlation between ageing, life experiences and emotional intelligence development then may best explain the observed discrepancy in mean emotional intelligence ratings for respondent groups based on type teacher certification program completed.

The disparity in certification routes taken by veteran (high frequency of traditional routes) and nonveteran (higher frequency of alternative routes) special educators is surely attributed to the relative short period of time in which alternative certification programs have been available to teachers. Thirteen years ago, when the youngest of this study's veteran population were first entering the field of education, alternative certification programs were simply not as available to them (Katsiyannis, Zhang, & Conroy, 2003; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000).

Sex. Although significant differences were not noted in the mean emotional intelligence ratings of the two sexes in this study, caution should be taken to consider the representation of each sex within the overall respondent population. The overall population of respondents was heavily disproportionately female. This issue of male underrepresentation, coupled with the fact that examinations of significant sex-based differences in mean emotional intelligence ratings have produced mixed results in previous studies impacts the reliability of any sex-based conclusions that are to be made from this study's results. Female subjects were found, in research efforts by Reiff, Hatzes, Bramel and Gibbon (2001) and Harrod and Scheer (2005), to have significantly higher mean emotional intelligence ratings than males. This study also found that the female respondent group ($M = 67.1$) outperformed the male respondent group ($M = 60.1$) in mean emotional intelligence rating although the noted differences were not statistically significant.

School Socioeconomic Level. The significant difference found in the mean emotional intelligence ratings of the respondent group comprised of teachers who work in schools serving student populations from high SES environments and the respondent

group that is comprised of teachers who work in schools serving student populations from lower SES environments appears to once again be related to the variable of experience level. An interesting trend can be seen when examining the teacher experience distribution between schools of high poverty and low poverty. Examination of the distribution of the most experienced (those with 20 or more years) and least experienced (those with 5 or less years) teachers among the respondent group reveals some interesting trends. Teachers with 20 or more years of experience accounted for 35 percent or 7 of the 20 teachers who are employed in schools serving high levels of impoverished students. In comparison, teachers with 20 or more years of experience accounted for only thirteen percent or 14 of the 106 teachers who reported employment in schools serving low numbers of impoverished students. Teachers with 5 or fewer years of experience accounted for 10 percent or 2 of 20 teachers in schools serving high levels of impoverished students. Teachers with 5 or fewer years of experience represent 33 percent or 36 of the 106 teachers employed in schools with low numbers of impoverished students. Such a unique dispersion of experience levels across schools with high and with low numbers of students from impoverished backgrounds may not hold a causal explanation for the significant results of this comparison but once again demonstrates the positive correlation between aging, experience and emotional intelligence.

Urban/Rural Designation of School. No significant difference was noted in the mean emotional intelligence ratings of respondents when grouped according to urban or rural location of their schools of service. Many schools in the Houston County School System do serve communities that meet U. S. Census Bureau definitions for rural and urban status. Despite the existence of qualifying urban and rural areas in Houston

County, the overall disparity found between these urban and rural areas is not substantial. The national studies that have made comparisons of teacher characteristics in urban and rural schools and have produced findings which describe the unique veteran teacher retention challenges that are faced by urban and rural areas have made comparisons of urban and rural extremes. The absence of significant differences in mean emotional intelligence ratings for teachers serving in urban and rural schools is most likely due to the relative absence of significant differences or disparity between conditions in urban and rural schools examined in this study.

Implications

The results of this study provide a number of implications of interest pertaining to emotional intelligence and its impact on the experiences of educators. Schools, school systems, teachers, students and researchers all stand to benefit from the new knowledge pertaining to emotional intelligence that has been produced through this study. The benefits to the field of education gained from this study's findings will surely parallel the benefits already seen among business-related organizations that have embraced emotionally intelligent approaches to personnel development and retention.

This study produced findings that indicate the existence of a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and the career decisions of special educators. With support from future related-research efforts, the results of this study may one day positively impact schools and school systems through improved professional learning programs which aim to develop emotionally intelligent workforces. With emotional intelligence now confirmed as a capacity that can be developed over time and through experience, EI may indeed be a focal point for professional learning in education settings.

As has been noted in organizations in the business sector, the employee retention-related benefits that accompany the adoption of emotionally intelligent practices should be quite appealing to schools and school systems.

Numerous organizations have spring forth to answer the demand for the provision of emotional intelligence development training and consultative services (TalentSmart Inc (2004); Talent Solutions Inc (2005) over the past decade and following the repeated publication of research indicating EI's potential to impact career and life success (Goleman, 1995; Bar-On, 2005; Cherniss, 2005). The approaches to EI development that are employed by these organizations usually take the form of group training activities or one-to-one coaching (more recently developed) (Talent Solutions Inc., 2005). Talent Solutions Inc. suggests that successful EI based training programs must be accompanied by preparatory activities that promote participant "buy-in" into the EI development process. Individual customization of training and one-to-one feedback are also suggested to be indicators of a quality EI development program. Such individualization helps to personalize the learning experience and to promote participant ownership of the training process and its benefits. Talent Solutions Inc. further describes the benefits of implementing well designed and highly relevant workshops which incorporate workplace specific case studies as well as behavioral modeling, simulations and customized role plays, all of which have been proven methods for developing EI abilities. Finally, it is suggested by Talent Solutions Inc. that major behavior changes can be garnished for both individuals and groups in a few as four one hour training sessions, provided that training programs are well designed and well implemented.

As is often the case in organizational behavior, a reciprocal relationship in which both the teacher workforce and school or school district benefit, stands to be established through the adoption of emotionally intelligent practices among organizations in education. Were school or district-wide adoptions of professional learning programs with emotionally intelligent focus to occur, those teachers who were exposed to such guidance stand to benefit directly in their daily practices and in their careers. Through their heightened abilities to communicate, recognize, remember, learn from, manage and understand emotions that accompany emotional intelligence development, teachers will be able to better cope with the daily stressors of their occupation and thus enjoy heightened rates of retention. The emotionally intelligent development of pupils represents an attractive potential fringe benefit of emotional intelligence development among educator populations as well. The same benefits that stand to be garnished by teachers through the development of emotional intelligence are surely available for acquisition by the pupils of emotional intelligence-abled teachers.

In addition to findings pertaining to emotional intelligence, this study produced findings that support the already established existence of severe socio-demographic inequities that exist among special educator populations in the United States. With an ever-diversifying student population entering schools in the United States each year, a teacher workforce that reflects this same diversity must be developed. Through the establishment of new alternative certification programs the avenues through which prospective teachers may enter the field of education has been broadened. Hopefully, with such expansion of opportunities for induction, the potential exists for more males and individuals of racial minorities to find entrance into the field of education. The

implications produced by this study compel school system personnel directors through their recruitment of teachers to take measures to lessen these demographic discrepancies. Students, teachers, schools, school systems and the field of education in general stand to reap the benefits that would accompany a more diversified workforce.

With critical shortages of highly-qualified instructors still facing school systems, the results of this study hold many implications for researchers who are concerned with the experiences of educators. This study, which is the first to examine emotional intelligence relative to special educators, provides a footing from which future research efforts concerning the very contemporary topics of emotional intelligence and the career decisions of special educators may be undertaken.

Recommendations

The implications of this study provide direction for future inquiry into matters that are impacting the field of special education. First, this study's significant findings pertaining to emotional intelligence, coupled with the existing body of research pertaining to emotional intelligence, provide ample justification for the continuance of emotional intelligence-related inquiry. While this study has demonstrated that a significant difference exists in the emotional intelligence of its veteran and nonveteran special educator respondents, replication of this study must be made. By replicating this study with more broad and diverse samples, the validity of this study's findings may be bolstered. In addition, if the findings of this study are replicated through future research attempts, more in-depth investigation into correlation and causality may occur.

Also of potential interest to researchers may be the equally significant discrepancies in the mean emotional intelligence of respondents when grouped according

to several socio-demographic and work-related variables. Continued scientific examination of demographic trends among educator populations, with special attention being given to the experiences of teachers who belong to minority sub-populations, may shed valuable light on issues relating to teachers' attrition, retention and career decisions. The results of this study proved to confirm much of what was already known pertaining to the fairly homogeneous socio-demographic composition of the special educator workforce in the United States. While becoming ever-more diversified, further examination and consideration are needed to determine how the special educator workforce can ensure improved recruitment and retention of a socio-demographically diverse population of teachers.

Longitudinal monitoring and investigation of the experiences of special educators who are prepared through alternative certification programs must also be endeavored. In this study, nearly a quarter of nonveteran special educator respondents were found to have sought initial teacher certification through alternative certification programs. With attrition rates highest among nonveteran special educators and with alternative certification programs often rated as lacking in adequate support systems for inductees, an insight-gaining understanding of the experiences of this population of special educators is of paramount importance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

THE TYPES OF DISABILITIES WHICH MAY QUALIFY A STUDENT TO RECEIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT

(National Council on Disability, 2004)

- 1 Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)
- 2 Speech or Language Impairments (SI/LI)
- 3 Mental Retardation (Now termed Intellectually Disabled)
- 4 Emotional/Behavior Disturbance (EBD)
- 5 Multiple Disabilities
- 6 Hearing Impairments (HI)
- 7 Orthopedic Impairments (OI)
- 8 Visual Impairments (VI)
- 9 Autism
- 10 Combined Deafness and Blindness
- 11 Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- 12 Other Health Impairments (OHI)

Appendix B

GARDNER'S MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

(Smith, 2002)

Linguistic intelligence involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically; and language as a means to remember information. Writers, poets, lawyers and speakers are among those that Howard Gardner sees as having high linguistic intelligence.

Logical-mathematical intelligence consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Howard Gardner's words, it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically. This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.

Musical intelligence involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms. According to Howard Gardner musical intelligence runs in an almost structural parallel to linguistic intelligence.

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. It is the ability to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements. Howard Gardner sees mental and physical activity as related.

Spatial intelligence involves the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas.

Interpersonal intelligence is concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. It allows people to work effectively with others. Educators, salespeople, religious and political leaders and counselors all need a well-developed interpersonal intelligence.

Intrapersonal intelligence entails the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations. In Howard Gardner's view it involves having an effective working model of ourselves, and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives

Naturalist Intelligence- Naturalist intelligence may be seen in the way we relate to our surroundings and the role each part of our surroundings

Appendix C

Houston County Board of Education

Danny Carpenter, Superintendent

P.O. Box 1850
Perry, Georgia 31069-0580

Board Members

James Boswell, Vice Chairman
Fred Wilson
W.G. Clements

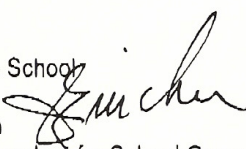
Pamela Greenway, Chairman

Skip Dawkins
Tom Walmer
Dr. Charles M. (Toby) Hill

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 8, 2006

TO: Jesse Davis
Feagin Mill Middle School

FROM: James H. Kinchen 
Assistant Superintendent for School Operations

SUBJECT: EDUCATIONAL STUDY

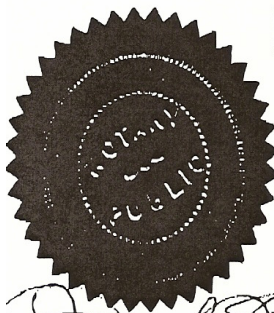
Your request to survey special education teachers at their year-end meeting (with the assistance of the special education program specialists) for your research project concerning special education teacher shortage is approved. As you noted in your request, please be sure to notify the principal of each school represented of your intentions to conduct this research.


Thank you as well for ensuring that there will be complete confidentiality with any and all data from the survey instrument.

Good luck with completing your doctorate degree. Please let me know if I may be of any assistance to you again in the future.

JHK:jm

c: Dr. Mike Mattingly
Dr. Ruth O'Dell
Mrs. Tempest Turner




Notary Public, Houston County, Georgia
My Commission Expires August 31, 2006

(478) 988-6200



www.hcbe.net

FAX (478) 988-6259

Appendix D

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs		
Institutional Review Board (IRB)		
Phone: 912-681-5465		Administrative Annex P.O. Box 8005 Statesboro, GA 30460
Fax: 912-681-0719	Ovrsight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	

To: Jesse W. Davis
100 Ruzic Drive
Kathleen, GA 31047

CC: Dr. Walter S. Polka, Faculty Advisor
P.O. Box 8131

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: May 17, 2006

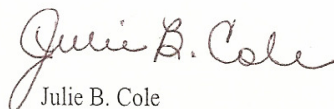
Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H06213**, and titled "**Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Career Resilience Among Special Education Teachers in the Houston County, Georgia School System**", it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol, you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



Julie B. Cole
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs

Appendix E

Part A

Please respond to the following items by circling the response to each question that most accurately describes you

1. *In which range does your age fall?*

Under 25 25-36 36-45 46-55 Over 55

2. *I am*

Male Female

3. *Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?*

Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American/Alaskan Native
African American/Non-Hispanic	Hispanic
White/Non-Hispanic	Multiracial

4. *The highest degree that I have earned is a*

Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Specialist Degree Doctorate

5. *Within what range does your annual teaching salary fall?*

Less than \$30,000 \$30,000-\$40,000 \$40,000-\$50,000 \$50,000-\$60,000
More than \$60,000

6. *The teacher certification program through which I received my initial teacher certification was...*

A traditional four-year college teacher preparation program

An alternative certification program such as the Georgia TAPP program

Please indicate your answers to the questions below in the blanks provided.

7. *How many years of credible teaching experience do you have?* _____

8. *At which school or schools do you currently teach?*

Part B

The General Emotional Intelligence Scale

Permission to include the General Emotional intelligence Scale (GEIS) as an appendix was not granted by the test's author Albert Mehrabian. For information regarding the purchase of rights to administer the GEIS please make use of the contact information provided below, taken from the GEIS website.

Contact Information:

- Albert Mehrabian, Ph.D.
- email: ampsych@gmail.com
- voice mail: 888 363 1732

Please specify the following information when you inquire about psychological tests:

- The institution where you will conduct your testing
- The individuals you will test
- Your reasons for testing

Student researchers may request the entire test manual free of charge by emailing a description of their project (be sure to mention the number of participants you will test)